A

PRACTICAL and PLAIN *DISCOURSE* OF THE FORM of GODLINESS, Visible in the present Age,

And of the

POWER of GODLINESS:

How and when it *obtains*; how *denied* or *oppressed*; and how to be *instated* or *recovered*.

WITH

some ADVICES to all that pretend to the *Power of Godliness*

By *Edward* Lord Bishop of *Cork* & *Ross*.

Dublin, Printed by *J. Ray*, for *J. North*, *J. Howes*, *S. Helsham* and *W. Winter*, Booksellers. 1683.

1578/7616

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29.2.84

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

To the most Honourable, the exemplarily Devout and Virtuous Lady, DOROTHY, *Countess of* ARRAN, &c.

MADAM,

THE Substance of the ensuing Discourse was for the main, delivered in a great Audience, whence

an unhappy Indiſpoſition cauſed your Ladiships Abſence: which at once hindred *me* of the Honour, and (as it was ſuggeſted to me by a diſcreet and pious Lady) your Ladiship alſo of the ſatisfaction of being an Hearer of it. Coming therefore now into the publick, with a deſign of publick Good, it is humbly preſented and dedicated to your Honour, in an Epiſtle as plain and homely, as it ſelf; with hopes it may be as welcome out of the Preſs, as 'twas ſuppoſed it would have been out of the Pulpit.

The

The other Reaſons, which moved me to inſcribe it to ſo great a Name, were, partly, that it having received a kind of ſacred Authority by paſſing through ſo Auguſt Hands, might be admitted with more Advantage and Facility into the Cloſets of other Perſons of Condition; and partly, that there might be extant ſome poor Teſtimony of my Gratitude to ſome of that Illuſtrious Family, which has been happily, and may it be much more, multiplied, by your Ladiſhip, now become a Glorious part of it.

As bounden, I daily pray all Acceſſion of Splendour, Felicity, and Stability to your Ladiship and the whole Noble Houſe: and beſeech this (however mean) expreſſion of Duty may be accepted from,

Madam,

Your Honours
moſt Dutiful
Servant and Orator
E. Cork & Roſſe.

TO

TO THE READER.

THough I wanted not the Importunity of many Friends, to extort, from me to the Preſs, the following Papers (of the Contents whereof I had much meaner thoughts than they, when the Subſtance of them was for a great part vocally publiſh'd); yet I will not diſſemble, but I was able to have hardened my ſelf, had I thought good, againſt ſuch Temptation: Setting therefore that aſide, the true Reaſon that this Diſcourſe comes abroad, is the ſame for which it was firſt con-

conceiv'd; *namely*, *becauſe* our part of the Chriſtian world has need of ſuch plain-dealing: *For let ſome ſorts of men pretend what they pleaſe*, Formality *prevails and advances daily amongſt all Parties profeſſing Religion in whatſoever way amongſt us*: *This is the* Popery, *which in theſe Kingdoms moſt threatens the Extirpation of our Religion. People content themſelves with the Name of* Chriſtians, *or* (*haply*) Proteſtants, *and with ſome* outward *courſe or waies of* Worſhip, *ſuiting their* Humours (*if not too often their* Sins): *But as to a conſtant* ſenſe of Religion, *and the* Fear *or* Love of God, *and as to the Fruits thereof*, *an* intire impartial Obedience, *or ſtudy of conforming their Hearts and Lives to the* Evangelical Rule, *herein they deſire to be excuſed. Any ſtate of things, or of Religion, which would but allow men their Senſualities, or other Sins, at an eaſie rate, ſeems to me to bid faireſt*

faireſt now adays for being Univerſal or Catholick. In the mean while it muſt needs ſeriouſly grieve all ſober men, to ſee any thing will now down with the Chriſtian world, but the true Chriſtian Life *and Temper. From a deep Senſe (but Sorrow not deep enough) of theſe things, did this plain Diſcourſe proceed.*

I ſee no Exception *which it is ſo liable to, as that I have therein both* too ſeverely judged the Age *my ſelf, and (as ſome may cenſure) taught others mutually to* judge one another. *As to the former part of which* Exception, *I ſay for my ſelf, I have not made it my buſineſs here to* judge, *but* reprove, convince, *and* reform: *I well remember my Chriſtian Duty, that we are not to judge according to every* Appearance; *nor is it perhaps laudable, to judge always according to what* generally *would be allowed for* Evidence; *but to ſuſpend our Sentence, and hope the beſt we can make*

make probable. But though neither common Appearance, *nor all kind of* Evidence *may be always ſufficient Warrants for our* Judging; *yet are they and muſt be the* Meaſures *and* Standards *of our* Reproving: *And I think I have reproved nothing, but what too plainly appears, and is more evident than I could deſire it were, for my Juſtification.*

As to the other part: I hope, thoſe Warnings and Cautions, which are interſperſt in the body of the Diſcourſe, may both aſſoil me of this Guilt, and prevent any thing of the nature ſuggeſted in the Readers. I deſire therefore ſuch paſſages as that pag. 12. [I ſend no man to cenſure others, but let each man turn his eyes inward, &c.] *and* chapt. iv. § 1, &c. *may be duely taken notice of; and then neither ſhall I be blamed, nor the Reader guilty of what the Exception imputes.*

It

To the Reader.

It is not improbable, many, when they ſee my Name *again in Print, may expect from me, conſidering how I have been uſed by ſome, other kind of Language, or Subject, than here they will find: But he who, of his infinite Grace,* counted me faithful, putting me into the Miniſtry, *when he gave me a* Commiſſion *to* preach, *gave me none to* render Railing for Railing: *which is all the Anſwer Mr.* B. *ſhall ever have from me, to his Libel againſt me, ſaving only this, that I* forgive, pity and pray for *him.*

There is another Gentleman, to me utterly unknown (whom I muſt acknowledg my ſelf much obliged to, for the frequent and undeſerved Honours he does me); who yet is pleaſed to ſay, I did not deal fairly with Mr. *B's* Book? *I ſuppoſe he meant, in not giving it an orderly and total Confutation. Truly my deſign in thoſe Papers of mine (which the Stationer and his Friends having curtail'd, named*

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the Proteſtant Peace-maker, *inſtead of* Anticeleuſma, *the Title I gave them*) *being only, after a very ſhort purging my ſelf from the wicked Latin, and worſe Senſe, which* Celeuſma *had affix'd to me,* (*to which purpoſe I had only put my plain Engliſh Text over againſt their ſcandalous Latin Tranſlation, and left all Readers to judge whether I ſpoke what they imputed*); *my deſign, I ſay, being, after that, only and wholly* Peace, *admitted not much Diſputation: I ſpoke very freely what I thought to be the true way to Peace: and I ſhewed other waies, and particularly, inveterately exaſperative writing* (*ſuch as was a certain Book*) *inſtead of* allaying *Quarrels, only* heightened *them. This I did, as others have thought, with Sweetneſs and Temper, not affixing one Expreſſion to any man that was not his. If in interpreting a certain perſons* Latin, *I referred* Natæ, Diſpoſitæ, &c. *to* Theologiæ

and

and not to Juventuti Academicæ *(as the Author ſays he intended it) I cannot now help my paſt miſtake: but the fault is chiefly theirs, who (beſides that they will not write like other men) will be writing in* Languages *which they are not able to menage intelligibly, nor were ever Maſters of the propriety of: In the mean time I could wiſh the* Fourth part *of the* Conformiſts Plea for the Nonconformiſts *had dealt as fairly with the* Government, Laws, *and even with the* Truth *it ſelf, as I did with Mr.* B's *Books. That Piece pretends to have been writ (chiefly) for my ſatisfaction amongſt others: but I profeſs my ſelf diſſatisfied with it, as well by the Authors bringing men in as* Sufferers for their Nonconformity, *before the* Act of Uniformity *took place, as for other miſtakes, which that good mans Charity (I will not ſay his Credulity) lead him into.*

I beg thy pardon, Good Reader,

for

To the Reader.

for detaining thee thus long from what follows. Be pleaſed to peruſe the annexed Abſtract, *or* Scheme, *and thou wilt more clearly* comprehend, *and more ſurely* remember *the whole ſubſtance of the Diſcourſe it ſelf. God direct us all to his heavenly Kingdom.*

ERRATA.

PAg. 32. l. 14. r. what practices, p. 44. l. 10. r. in *any*, p. 47. l. 2. r. hearkened *not*, p. 68. l. 4. r. *to* the, p. 79. l. 4. r. deny) p. 117. l. 11. r. proof *thereof*, p. 119. l. 1. r. Endeavours, p. 137. l. 16 r. Pſal. cvi.

A Practical Diſcourſe, of the Form of Godlineſs, viſible in the preſent Age, &c.

CHAP. I.

Sect. 1. *We have reaſon to conclude our ſelves fallen into thoſe which the Scripture calls the* Laſt Days. Sect. 2. *In thoſe days, it is foretold, there ſhould be in the Chriſtian Church a multitude, having a Form of Godlineſs, but denying the Power of it.* Sect. 3. *What the Apoſtle meant by thoſe terms.* Sect. 4. *The Character charged on the preſent Age.* Sect. 5. *The Charge propounded to be made good in particulars.* Sect. 6. *An Account of many Pretences and Practices which at preſent paſs into a Form of Godlineſs.* Sect. 7. *Others may be collected by regard to theſe.*

§. 1. WHen Events fully anſwer Propheſies, there can be little doubt to what times

thoſe Propheſies do belong. There being therefore extant in Holy Scripture divers Prophetical Characters of the Laſt Days; and our Experience and Reflections on the preſent Age too ſadly convincing us, thoſe Characters dreadfully agree with the preſent Manners, we cannot, or may not, but conclude that we are fallen into ſome part of thoſe laſt Days.

§. 2. Amongſt other Propheſies, which we find of thoſe days, That is one of the fulleſt and moſt memorable, which we find in 2 *Tim. ch.* iii. *In the laſt days perilous times ſhall come*; in the Original, *difficult times*, καιροὶ χαλεποί. And in what regard, the following *verſes* explain: *Men ſhall be lovers of their own ſelves, Covetous, Boaſters*, &c. By *Men* doubtleſs he deſigns not ſo much the general maſs of Mankind, conſiſting of all Nations and People upon the face of the Earth, as Men in the Church, and ſuch who profeſs

feſs and call themſelves Chriſtians: for it is plain, the main body of the World were, even at the writing of this Epiſtle, ſuch; and indeed ever had been ſince the multiplication of Mankind once and again: But as elſewhere predicting that the Day of the Lord ſhould not come, except there came a falling away firſt, ſo here he particularly ſpecifies the more practical part of that Propheſie, or the degenerous Manners of Chriſtendom that ſhould be in the later days. The Senſe then of the firſt Verſe in that Propheſie is, that the Chriſtian world ſhould come to ſuch paſs, that the Vices of thoſe who paſſed for Chriſtians ſhould render it very difficult for them, who were to *teach and inſtruct* (Ch. ii. 24, 25.) to perform their Duty with good Conſcience; or indeed, for any private perſons either to *recover themſelves out of the ſnare of the Devil* (v. 26.) or to eſcape the Corruptions of the Age, and pre-

ſerve their Innocence and Integrity. Now that we live in ſuch an age of Chriſtianity, we cannot deny; nor therefore, that theſe our days are ſome of the *laſt*. The three next following Verſes it is not neceſſary to my preſent deſign that I particularly examine or paraphraſe upon. The ſum of them is, that in that degenerate ſtate and age by the Apoſtle predicted, ſuch Profeſſors of Chriſtianity ſhould abound who were overrun with ſuch Immoralities, which not only the Evangelical Law, but even Nature it ſelf has ever adjudged the moſt abominable Vices. And the diſmal Liſt of theſe runs ſo high and large, that it is not eaſie to inſtance in that crime, which may not be reduced to ſome of thoſe comprehenſive Heads there enumerated, namely of *Selfiſhneſs*, *Covetouſneſs*, *Blaſphemy*, *Ingratitude*, *Cruelty*, *Treachery*, *Voluptuouſneſs*, *Profaneneſs*, &c. Now where the multitude ſhould be ſo profligately bad,

bad, what remains there could be of Religion and Chriſtianity a man would wonder. Yet we ſee even in this ſtate of publick Manners the Apoſtle not only admits, but foretells, People ſhould have a Form of Godlineſs, though, by reaſon of the afore ſpecified flagitiouſneſs, it muſt needs be that they *ſhould deny the Power of it.* Now there being too juſt a ſuſpicion, that as the former part of this Character is verified in the Lives of the preſent Chriſtian world, ſo this later part, and cloſe, of it belongs to us alſo. Before we roundly accuſe, or undertake to prove the Age guilty of it, it will be expedient a little more diſtinctly to conſider the terms of the Charge.

§. 3. By *Godlineſs* the Apoſtle, undoubtedly, in the place mentioned, intended only Religion in general, or the Belief and Worſhip of the true God. What he ſtiles the *Form* hereof, ſeems to import two

things. Firſt, an Idea, Scheme or Draught of Religious Doctrine or Principles: And thus the ſame Apoſtle elſewhere uſed the very ſelf ſame term, *viz. Rom.* ii. 20. where ſpeaking touching the Self-pleaſing Jew, he brings him in as having a Form of Knowledg, and of the truth of the Law. And we have no reaſon to exclude this Form of Knowledg from the Form of Godlineſs, admitted by the Apoſtle to be in thoſe wicked livers he taxeth. As wildly as they lived, they might have, as the Jew (and perhaps value themſelves upon their having) a meaſure of Religious Knowledg. Secondly, the Form of Godlineſs ſeems further to import ſome Exteriour lines or touches of Religion, an habit or courſe of ſome outward Religious uſages, and ſo ſome imperfect ſhew and appearance of the inward Virtue. 'Tis μόρφωσις, not μορφή. A Formation rather than a *Form*; a rude Draught, not a well-

wrought

wrought Picture of Godlineſs; which diſtinguiſheth the perſons there characteriſed from demure Hypocrites, who poſſibly have a more perfect mein of Godlineſs, and act it more to the life: Not that ſuch hypocritical perſons are before God better than the downright profane: For *Malus, bonum cum ſimulat, tunc eſt peſſimus*; *Satan is never more a Devil, than when he appears as an Angel of Light*: yet certainly (*docendi causâ*) doctrinally we may diſtinguiſh betwixt negligent, looſe Profeſſors of Chriſtian Religion at large, and ſtarch'd, deſigning Counterfeits. I take it to be the former ſort the Apoſtle chiefly deciphers and condemns; but I muſt not exclude the later.

What the *Power of Godlineſs* means we may collect eaſily by the Oppoſition it bears to the *Form*. The Form is the imperfect Image and Shew: the Power is that Energy, Force, Virtue and Efficacy, which

the Principles of Godlineſs, underſtood and believed, are apt to have upon mens Hearts and Lives. In thoſe men, in whom a ſerious, devout and ſelf-denying temper, a juſt and holy Life is found, in thoſe I ſay, and in thoſe alone, the Power of Godlineſs takes place and appears. Now as to the Phraſe of Denying the Power of Godlineſs, it is only an Hebraiſm (*à verbis ad facta ductâ tranſlatione*) applying that way of ſpeech to *things*, which properly belongs to *words* or verbal Aſſertions: When we agree not to, or when we oppoſe and gainſay, any thing that is avowed to us, we are ſaid to *deny* it: In like manner, when we yield not to, or oppoſe, that force and efficacy, which the Doctrine of Godlineſs, in its own nature, is apt to have upon us, we are, in the Apoſtles Language, ſaid to deny the Power of Godlineſs. So that the general ſenſe of theſe terms, Denying the Power of Godlineſs,

lineſs, is, to obſtruct and ſuppreſs that influence, which the Chriſtian Faith and Law, believed and received, would naturally have upon us. The ſum then of this part of the Apoſtles Prediction is, that in the later Ages of Chriſtianity, there ſhould be a multitude in the Chriſtian Church who ſhould retain only ſome knowledg, uſages and outward ſhew of Chriſtianity, and ſo the name of Chriſtians; but as to the Chriſtian ſpirit and temper, this they ſhould oppreſs and deſtroy by wicked and abominable Lives.

§ 4. Now I charge this Character upon the generality of Chriſtians in the preſent age. It is, I ſay, a ſad truth, and ought to be matter of deep and daily Lamentation, that after ſo long enjoyment of the noon-day light of the Goſpel, after ſo many amazing Bleſſings and awakening Judgments, after our having been toſſed, and, as it were, *emptied from veſſel to veſſel*, Jer. 24. 11.

after

after ſo many pretended endeavors, and perhaps real ſtruglings, towards the pureſt Reformation, all that there is of Religion viſible in the Chriſtian Commonalty is only ſome ſuperficial Knowledg of, and a bold claim to Chriſtianity; ſome outſide Formalities of Divine Worſhip and cuſtomary Devotions: but as to a true ſenſe of Piety and the real Fear of God, as to a cordial Belief of the Goſpel of Chriſt Jeſus influencing and changing mens hearts and lives, how rarely is it to be found! How difficult to be effected! Good God! In what a ſtrange Latitude muſt the Name *Chriſtian* be taken, that we, who at preſent live, may in any proportion be truly denominated *Chriſtians*?

§. 5. Nor is this Charge at all extravagant or unreaſonable; it will be ſadly made good by particulars. I ſay then (1.) The great buſineſs of the generality of men in the matter of Religion, is, fairly to raiſe and

and maintain *a Form of Godlineſs*. And (2.) The gaining and keeping a true Chriſtian Spirit or Temper, and living conform to the Chriſtian Law or Rule, is the care and exerciſe of very few. That is, (to put both Propoſitions into one) the generality amongſt us, in the Apoſtles Language, *Have a Form*, but *Deny the Power of Godlineſs*. And this ſhall be made good by a particular examination of mens practices.

§. 6. As to the former Branch; the *Pretences*, *Claims* and *Practices*, which amongſt men paſs into a *Form of Godlineſs* are as various as their Conditions, Educations, Humour and Genius's. I will enumerate here ſuch as are moſt frequent amongſt us.

And I muſt firſt mention, what has been already ſuggeſted out of *Rom.* ii. 20. Some meaſure of *knowledge* and *underſtanding* in the *Doctrine of Chriſtianity* is that upon which many ſet up for Religious, and perhaps are reputed

puted ſo, both by themſelves and others. I ſend no man to cenſure others, but let each man turn his eyes inward, and ſee if that moſt of the Religion he has lie not in a Collection of Notions and Speculations treaſured up in his Brain: Some people would be content to call this *Faith*; but it is too frequently only a Ferrumination or paltry ſtock of Opinions: and though a man may have very much of Religious Knowledge, and yet deny the Power of Godlineſs, (otherwiſe there could be no wicked men, but Ignorants;) yet it is ſcarce conceivable that any man can be born or bred up and converſe amongſt Chriſtians, but he ſhall thereby become furniſh'd with Knowledg, which will ſuffice to a Form of Godlineſs. There were a ſort of men amongſt the Jews which ſeem an exact Parallel of the Formal Chriſtians of this Age: I will therefore generally illuſtrate each particular with that pattern;

pattern; I mean the *Scribes* and *Phariſees:* They were ſenſible there could be but two ſorts of men in the world, good and bad, religious and irreligious: Now what Stile had they for them. *John* vii. 49. *This people who know not the Law are curſed. Knowing* or *not knowing the Law,* with them, conſtituted a man religious or irreligious. I would not here be miſtaken; I am not decrying Knowledg: but if *Faith without Works* be *dead,* Knowledg, or an empty pretence thereto, when a man ſhall value himſelf ſolely thereupon in the matter of Religion, muſt neceſſarily be a fallacious ground of Confidence, and a meer *Form of Godlineſs.*

2. Others there be, who to their real or pretended Knowledg add a popular and ſpecious *Profeſſion* of believing the Religious Doctrines they are ſuppoſed to underſtand. A Profeſſion of Faith indeed all amongſt us, whether knowing or ignorant,

ignorant, daily make or maintain. And thus far none within the pale of the Church (generally) can be well imagined, not to have a Form of Godlineſs. But ſome are content to go along with the Herd, and are as much unconcerned in their very *Profeſſion*, as in the *Practice* of Chriſtianity. If in common cuſtom they are preſent at our Congregations, and ſtand up at the Creed, by that poſture (perhaps without Knowledg) ſignifying their aſſent, 'tis in a manner as much Profeſſion as can be perceived they make. But others there are, into whoſe company you cannot come, though upon common buſineſs or civility, but they will preſently by head and ſhoulders fetch *Religion* into *Diſcourſe*, and tell you their concernments at the Atheiſm and Vices of the times; Nay, haply their very *Looks*, *Habit*, *Geſture*, and Carriage of their Body, are ſo *managed*, that a man who converſes not

not with them, but only ſees them paſs by, may eaſily eſpy therein the *ſymptoms* of a *Religious Profeſſion:* Far be it from me here to condemn Gravity, ſerious or holy Diſcourſe, much leſs to cenſure the Confeſſion or Profeſſion of our Faith, which, as the Apoſtle tells it, is neceſſary to our *Salvation*, to *make* even *with the Mouth.* (*Rom.* x. 9, 10.) But when, upon due examination of a mans Conſcience, it ſhall appear unto him, that the main of his Religion conſiſts in ſuch an *habitual outward ſhew*, he certainly has moſt juſt reaſon to cenſure himſelf ſeverely for a *Form of Godlineſs.* We know whoſe practice it was to make *broad* their *Philacteries*, (certain Parchments or ſuch like ſtuff, whereon were written ſundry paſſages of the Law, which they wore as Welts or Guards to their Clothes, for putting them in mind of their Duty, according to the Command, *Numb.* xv. 38, 39.) and to enlarge the

the *Borders* of their *Garments*; ſo that they could not paſs the ſtreet, but men might be able to obſerve, *There goes a Saint*, at leaſt by pretence. I will not exaggerate ſome mens Religious Anticks: but let all beware Affectation in this kind, as they would approve their ſincerity to God, Man and Themſelves. And eſpecially, let it be eſteemed a dreadful ſort of Religion, to *confeſs* once or twice a week in the Church, We believe in God, and all the week after in Works to deny him. *Tit.* i. 16. Some ſuch perſons may pretend to be Church-men, but they, and the World, ought to know, the Church owns them not: they are indeed of no Church, nor of any Religion, but the Reproach of Chriſtianity, and the Dregs of the moſt degenerate Age thereof.

3. The *Exerciſe*, and perhaps the *Oſtentation* of ſome pretended *Gifts of the Spirit*, but poſſibly only common natural or acquired abilities,

lities, ſerves ſome men to paſs them for godly in the World. They can haply adviſe well, and *diſcourſe volubly* in matters of Religion: and they have arrived at a Faculty of *Praying* in another ſort than the reſt of the Common People can, which is commonly (how properly I diſpute not at preſent) called the *Gift of Prayer:* Now this many take for a very high degree of proficiency in Religion. Nor ſhall I ſpeak againſt, but highly commend the humble exerciſe of ſuch ability, by them who have it, *in loco*, between God and themſelves, or perhaps ſometimes otherwiſe. I with all my heart wiſh there were more of this ability, and more of the ſober uſe thereof in the Chriſtian Church. But the Affectation hereof is vain, and the making this a diſtinction or eſſential part (much more the main) of our Religion, is ſinful and pernicious. At the beſt, where ſeparate from ſincerity, 'tis but a *Form of Godlineſs*,

though perhaps one of the moſt ſpecious kinds. 'Tis well known what a generation of men there were of old [ΠΡΟΦΆΣΕΙ ΜΑΚΡΑ ΠΡΟΣΕΥΧΌΜΕΝΟΙ·] who both could and did to commend themſelves to popular eſteem *make long prayers* (*Matth.* xxiii. 14.) and yet certainly were not more Godly, but more Hypocrites, whether for their Abilities or their Practice in this kind. And any man of conſideration will eaſily perceive and allow, that, though it were admitted that this ability were immediately from the Spirit, yet it is a deplorable caſe, that all, which a man has of the Spirit of God, ſhould dwell in his Lips, Tongue, or Phanſie. If theſe are the great accompliſhments we value our ſelves upon, when we come to be *weighed* in the Divine *Balances* we ſhall certainly be found *wanting* and very light.

4. A pretence to *Zeal*, and being earneſt for this or that Opinion and Party in our Divided Church, is, God

God knows, the whole Religion of too many; but certainly, whereſoever *ſeparate from Virtue*, a meer and moſt *empty Form of Godlineſs*. And it is ſadly obſervable that the generality of mens Zeal is wholly imployed for or againſt *leſſer things*. How many in theſe Nations, even of thoſe who would be reputed (and haply in other things are) ſober men, ſpend all their Religious Fervour in crying up, and others in crying down, what it had been happy for the Church of God, if it had never heard of. I muſt avow, I do judge thoſe, who are zealous for Conformity, even to the ſmaller Injunctions, to be of the two ſorts of Zealots, much the more juſtifiable: for they have Obedience to the Lawful Commands of a Lawful, and the beſt, Government, to plead for them: but it cannot be denyed, that there is more than a little overdoing even on this ſide; many a Conteſt *entred*, of which no other iſſue can

be expected but mutual exaſperations, and *managed* with ſuch eagerneſs, as if *Ceremonies* were the *whole Duty of Man.* On the other ſide, I mean of the *Nonconformiſts*, not only the *Cauſe*, but in my poor judgment the *Management* is worſe; the Heats and Clamours more exceſſive: And yet all this would I not touch at preſent on either ſide, were theſe animoſities generally look'd upon as the Infirmities or extravagant Paſſions of men; But the miſchief of all is, they muſt paſs for an excellent degree of Religion, though in truth, I ſay, they are but a more *modiſh* and *faſhionable Form of Godlineſs.* We can tell the world on one hand, who they were that were ſollicitous to *make clean the outſide of the Cup and the Platter*, as alſo to *tithe Mint and Rue, and all manner of Herbs*, (which were matters only of *Tradition* or *Eccleſiaſtical Conſtitution*) and yet *paſſed over judgment and the Love of God*, Luke xi. 42.

And

And on the other, who *ſtrained at Gnats*, and *ſwallowed Camels*, Matt. xxiii. 24. Far be it from us, to judg the Hearts of men, or to cenſure particular Perſons, much leſs Parties, as hypocritical; but it is ſure that theſe are generally the Characters of evil men, and of ſuch who are only formal in Religion.

5. A pretence of being *poſſeſs'd* of the *true Church*, having been admitted into, and lived in the *Communion* of it, ſuffices too many for the whole of Religion; albeit perhaps they are able to give very little account what the true Church is, and know nothing of the Offices of Communion, but the outward part and ſhell of them. This *Form of Godlineſs*, however ſome of us may flatter our ſelves, is very frequent amongſt *Proteſtants* as well as *Papiſts*. I meddle not with the later of theſe, becauſe I preſume none of them will read what I here write: but I wiſh Ignorance, even

in theſe points of Religion, I now am ſpeaking of, were confin'd to thoſe, who are reputed the vulgar either of *them* or of *our ſelves*. I am ſure, it is not for want of Ignorance that ſo many, who call themſelves *Proteſtants*, look upon themſelves as ſecure, meerly by being (as we ſpeak) in the *Reformed Church*, born within its *pale*, baptiſed early into its *Faith*, bred up and living (as they pretend) according to its *Orders*: None I hope can ſuſpect I undervalue any of theſe ſo happy Priviledges; No, to my dying day, I ſhall bleſs God for all, even the leaſt of them, if any may be accounted little: Ineſtimable is the benefit of being *born* and *bred* up in the *Proteſtant Church*. But this, I ſay, *Names, Titles* or *Claims* to the true Church, or even the *Poſſeſſion* of heavenly advantages & means to bleſſedneſs in it, conſtitute no man *godly*; but a confidence in them too often proves a *fatal Form of Godlineſs*.

neſs. No man certainly is religious (*ex traduce*) by deſcent, no nor by Birth-place, or any of thoſe felicities which were his fate, not his choice: Let us ſadly reflect how little good it did them (*John* viii. 33.) that they could boaſt themſelves to be *Abrahams Seed*, or (chap. ix. 28.) *Moſes his Diſciples*, that is, in our modern language, *born in the true Church*, or *bred up in the true Faith*, (for ſuch certainly till our Lords coming was the *Seed of Abraham*) and the *Doctrine of Moſes*) that they could cry up *the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord*, Jerem. vii. 4. that is, as we now ſpeak, *Purity of Ordinances:* A dreadful Caveat it was of St. *John Baptiſts* to this purpoſe, *Matth.* iii. 9. *Think not to ſay within your ſelves, we have* Abraham *to our Father: for I ſay unto you, God is able out of theſe ſtones* (which lay by the Water-ſide where he was baptizing) *to raiſe up Children unto* Abraham. In other terms,

rather than evil men, however born of Saints or faithful Progenitors, and confident in their Church-priviledges, ſhall ever enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, God will work Miracles, and turn Stones into Men, that he may have wherewith to people the heavenly Kingdom. So uſeleſs a Form of Godlineſs is a meer *Claim to the true Church.*

6. How many men make a great Figure in the world as to their Religion, meerly for having cenſured others leſs holy than themſelves, and forborn their Converſation, or withdrawn themſelves from their Communion? Yet has this alſo been an *old*, as it is a *preſent*, *Self-deceit.* In the Prophets time, *Stand by thy ſelf, come not neer to me, for I am holier than thou:* (*Iſai.* lxv. 5. which ſeems to me undoubtedly alluded to by our Lord, in the Character he gives of one of thoſe Gentlemen in his days, who *ſtood and prayed,*

prayed, — I am not as this Publican, Luk. xviii. 11. A deplorable thing indeed! that *Pride, Uncharitableneſs* and *Diviſion*, the true ſpawn of Hell, ſhould paſs for *Godlineſs*; but ſo it comes to paſs too often: However let not Readers cenſure this in others, for they cannot ſee their Hearts: but let them examin each his own Conſcience, and condemn, reform, and beg pardon of whatſoever they find thereof in themſelves: And for as much as there are few ſinners ſo ſingular in the world, whoſe parallels are not too eaſily & frequently to be found; when therefore they humble themſelves for this their own Sin, let them do what they can to reform, and at leaſt earneſtly pray to God to reform and pardon it in the Chriſtian world.

7. And laſtly, The moſt plauſible and ſpecious *Form of Godlineſs* in the world (that which comes neereſt and looks likeſt to true Godlineſs, yet

yet is not it) is *a fair courſe of outward and partial Conformity to the Law of God*; conſiſting in a good meaſure of what we uſually call *Negative Righteouſneſs*, with the addition of ſome poſitive, but chiefly bodily Devotions; and eſpecially, of ſuch particulars of both, as may moſt recommend to the good thoughts and fair eſteem of men. This was the heighth and nobleſt pitch of the *Phariſaical Virtue*: As to *Negative Holineſs*, ſays he, *I am no Extortioner, no unjuſt perſon, no Adulterer, nor as the Publican.* Men of theſe Characters were infamous, and accounted amongſt *Jews* (it were to be wiſh'd they were ſo amongſt *Chriſtians*) unfit for humane ſociety: And as to the *poſitive* part, *I faſt twice in the week*, (namely, *Mondays* and *Thurſdays*, as was the ſtricteſt Jews practice) *I pay tithes of all that I poſſeſs* (Luk. xviii. 11, 12.) not only even to *Pot-herbs* and *Sallating*, as we have found already out

out of St. *Luke*, but as to the meaneſt ſort of Spicery, *Anniſe* and *Cummine*, Matth. xxiii. 23. God forbid we ſhould cenſure that all, who do thus much, do no more. We may not; for we can neither fully know mens ſecret Practices, nor, as ſaid, at all ſee their Hearts: But let all men examine their own Morals and Religion; let them ſearch their Hearts and Conſciences: There is no man ſo bad in whom ſome good, nay perhaps ſome complication and train of good actions, is not, in one part or other of his life, to be found; Even *Herod obſerved John Baptiſt*, and when he heard him he *did many things*, and *heard him gladly* (Mark vi. 20.) yet no one ever admired his Saintſhip. And that hopeful *young man*, whom Jeſus *loved*, had (we will ſuppoſe ſo far as not to be ſcandulouſly or notoriouſly obnoxious) *obſerved all the Commandments* of the ſecond Table (*Mark* x. 19, 20, 21.) yet

lacked

lacked ſo much, as never to arrive at the true Love of God, or perhaps exceed the *Righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees:* I ſay then, it is not a fair civil Converſation in the world, though accompanied with many acts of Juſtice, and of like moral Virtues, no nor with ſeeming Diligence and Regularity in the outward Worſhip of God, which will ſet a man beyond *a Form of Godlineſs:* All theſe may be where yet the Heart is void of a radicated Belief, Fear and Love of God, not at all reſign'd and given up unto him; void of Charity, Humility, Contempt of this world, Heavenly-mindedneſs and the like Qualifications, wherein, above all, Godlineſs doth conſiſt. And therefore theſe may make up but a *Form*, *Image* or *Appearance of Godlineſs*, though the faireſt of them all, and ſo far amiable, that our Lord, as above-mentioned, is ſaid to have *loved* him who had it.

§. 7. Di-

§. 7. Diverſe other particulars poſſibly might be collected and enumerated, by which many in the world make out, and keep up a *Form of Godlineſs*, to the utter ſuppreſſion of the Power of it in themſelves, and the great prejudice of it in others: But theſe mentioned I conceive the moſt riſe and frequent amongſt us, and by regard had hereto, and parity of Reaſon, an ordinary Judgment will be able to conclude of any other which ſhall occur. That only I would here further admoniſh (and beſeech all to remember it,) that be the *Form of Godlineſs* in whatſoever it ſhall, be it alſo never ſo far advanced and completed, the more to the life this Picture is drawn, the more Induſtry, Care and Art there is uſed in the Colours or working (as I may ſo ſpeak) the more odious is it in Gods eyes: Where it is in any the iſſue of their *Natural* or *Providential infelicities*, and approaches as

as neer Godlineſs as ſuch mens ſtate would well admit, there it may find ſome *commiſeration*; and may be an *alloy* to their *miſery* as well as *guilt*; But where it is *affected*, and matter of a *ſtudied deſign*, there the more *artificial* it is, by ſo much the more abominable and vile is it. 'Tis the heighth and complement of all their other Villanies: And ſuch perſons, except Truth it ſelf could lye, *ſhall receive the greater Damnation*. Matth. xxiii. 14.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Of the Power of Godlineſs.

Sect. 1. *The method of what follows, and its reaſons.* Sect. 2. *By what gradations or ſteps* Godlineſs *comes to have* power *upon men.* Sect. 3. *When it may be ſaid to have its due* Power. Sect. 4. *An account of that* habitual temper *which is the effect hereof in the heart of man.* Sect. 5. *A proviſion againſt ſome ſcruple or doubt hence ariſing.* Sect. 6. *The ſum of the whole on this general head.*

§. 1. THE *Materials* are now brought together and laid down, whence, with the help of a little *reflection* upon common practice, the firſt point of the Charge above brought might be made good, namely,

namely, That the great buſineſs of moſt men in the matter of Religion is fairly to raiſe and maintain a *form of Godlineſs.*) But there being another part remaining in order to the verifying of the whole Character, we will firſt clear that; and then joining and ſuming up the evidence of both, we may more ſatisfactorily conclude on the whole.

Now the ſecond part of the Character being *denying the Power of Godlineſs*, the great queſtion will be how, or by what it practices that is done. But it being impoſſible to be clear in the underſtanding any *negative Notion*, before we have a diſtinct knowledge of its *poſitive contrary*; that we may therefore be able to make an exacter eſtimate how many ways men *deny the Power of Godlineſs*, we will *firſt* enquire, how and by what ſteps *Godlineſs* comes to have any *power* upon the ſouls or lives of men? and *next*, when it may be ſaid to have its *due power*?

§. 2.

§. 2. We ſay then, Godlineſs obtains power over men by theſe degrees.

1. When the *Principles* of it are *duely underſtood.* By the *Principles of Godlineſs* I mean, the plain & undoubted points of *Chriſtian belief* and *practice.* And by a *due underſtanding* of them I mean, a being able (*pro re natâ*) as occaſion ſerves, to frame in our minds conceptions and notions, as well of the *Doctrines* of *Faith*, as *Rules of Practice*, ſo far clear and diſtinct, as may be a ſufficient ground both to direct and quicken, over-rule or govern our Practice. To enumerate all the Principles of Godlineſs is beſides the preſent deſign: It is ſufficient, we aſſign the *chief*, and ſhew where the *reſt* are to be found: The main ones are theſe; That *God* is (or has a moſt true and real Being) and that he is *a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him*; That he has given us a moſt *excellent Law*, and made a moſt *gratious Covenant*

with us in the Bloud of *Chriſt Jeſus*: That by the Bloud of this Covenant whoſoever repent and believe ſhall aſſuredly obtain *Remiſſion of Sins, Grace* and *Glory*: That whoſoever *have this Hope* in them are to *purge themſelves from all filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit*, to live *godlily, righteouſly and ſoberly in this world*: That after death, *all men* ſhall *riſe again*, and appear before *Gods Judgment-ſeat*, where *every work* ſhall be *brought into judgment, with every ſecret thing whether it be good or bad.* That all men ſhall *receive according as they have done in the body*, and it ſhall appear, the Judge of all the Earth is righteous. Theſe and ſuch like matters, contained in the *Creed*, the *Decalogue*, and the Doctrine of the *Sacraments*, we uſually call the *Principles of Chriſtianity*. But however powerful and operative theſe Doctrines may ſeem, or perhaps be felt, to be, upon any of us; it is very ſure, they could

could have no power upon us, if we *underſtood* them not: 'Tis by the underſtanding alone that they can be let in to the Soul: And therefore ſome men, who think *Ignorance* a very tolerable evil, if not publickly beneficial to Peace, and to a certain kind of Devotion, are to remember, that with them *Holineſs*, whether of *Heart* or *Life*, or indeed any other part of true and *real Religion*, comes not into conſideration. They may and do perhaps provide to make this world *quiet*, that is ſtupid, ſenſeleſs, carnal and formal; but they conſult not at all the making it truly Chriſtian: If *Chriſt* had come to plant a Religion, of which *Ignorance* could either have been a *Mother*, or a *kindly Nurſe*, he had been much beſides himſelf, when he inculcated himſelf to be the *Light of the world*; and the Prophet had as much abuſed us, who ſtyled him the *Sun of Righteouſneſs*: When men can ſhew us

how we can heartily aſſent to any thing that we do not underſtand, or be durably or rationally affected with any thing which we do not believe, then will we admit *Religious Knowledge* to be an uſeleſs or indifferent thing, and that *Godlineſs* may have its full power on thoſe, who know not what it means: But till then we muſt remain of *Solomons* mind (*Prov.* xix. 2.) *That the Soul be without Knowledge, it is not good*; or as, me thinks, the Hebrew rather runs בלא דעת נפש לא־טוב *Where there is not Knowledg, the Soul is not good.* So that it remains, *a good honeſt underſtanding of the Articles of Faith and Doctrine of Chriſtian manners* is the firſt ſtep towards the *Power of Godlineſs.*

2. A ſecond ſtep (and of no leſs neceſſity than the former) is, that we *really believe* what we are ſuppoſed, ſo as before ſaid, to underſtand. For it is very ſure, men may

may underſtand, not only many notions, but divers long ſeries, or trains and compoſitions, of them, in which notwithſtanding they do not perſuade themſelves there is any reality: And it is as ſure that thô ſuch feigned Stories or Intrigues may ſometimes confuſedly move our Joy, Sorrow, Pity or Sympathy, yet theſe are only vain, (and in a ſort irrational,) tranſient Paſſions, not changing our Counſels and Reſolutions, much leſs prevailing durably to influence our Manners and Courſe of living. The Conduct of our Lives follows our ſettled Perſuaſions and real Senſe of things. It is not therefore ſufficient, for the aſſerting *Godlineſs* into its *due Power* over us, that we conceive aright, or have the true meaning of the ſeveral Points of *Faith* and Rules of *Duty*, but it is further needful, that we be really perſuaded, and our Hearts deeply poſſeſſed, theſe Doctrines are True, theſe Precepts

both Equitable and actually Obligatory; For that God hath publiſhed from Heaven, and as it were ſet his Seal hereto, that no one ſhall be Bleſſed, who does not, according to the opportunities he has, believe the one, and honeſtly practice the other. And thus much we ſhall never believe, except we ſee or feel in our Conſciences convictive evidences thereof. Wherefore, in the taking in Religious Knowledg, if we intend *Godlineſs* ſhall have its *power* upon us (that is, if we intend to be religious in good earneſt) we muſt endeavour, not only to comprehend the true notions and nature of things, but the ſeveral evidences which may perſuade us of their Reality, Truth, and Obligatorineſs, and that they are matters no whit feigned, but certain, and of the moſt ſerious importance to us of any in the world; as being ſuch, upon the obſervance or neglect of which, by the irre-

fragable

fragable Ordination of the God of Truth, our Eternal Happineſs or Miſery depends. It is to be lamented, this is a part of Chriſtian Knowledge not only too much wanting in the world, but too little ſtudied by the generality of Chriſtians; and no doubt not without the great prejudice of the *Power of Godlineſs.* Further,

3. It is neceſſary that in the particulars of our Life and Actions, theſe Principles thus underſtood and believed be *actually attended unto,* in order to the Governing our ſelves thereby. For we ſee it too ſadly true, men may underſtand and believe, what partly through infirmity and natural inadvertency, partly through negligence and groſsneſs, they too little heed. Therefore that *Godlineſs* may have its *due power*, all who conſider the caſe will eaſily acknowledg it indiſpenſibly neceſſary, men endeavour to maintain a *conſtant attention* unto, or *habitual*

bitual ſenſe of, the Chriſtianity they believe. The *Rule of Practice*, or Chriſtian Law, then, muſt (as neer as can be) ever be ſet and kept before us, to examine thereby all actions that paſs us (or the occaſions and exerciſe whereof occur) whether the Actions are *good*, or whether *evil*: In like manner alſo the great points of *Faith*, (eſpecially ſuch influential ones, as the *Nature of God*, his *Omniſcience*, *Juſtice*, *Goodneſs*, &c. the *certainty of Judgment to come*, with the like) muſt be ever before us to incite and quicken us as well to eſchew the *evil* as chooſe the *good*. This is, in *Davids* language, *having reſpect unto Gods Statutes continually*, Pſalm. cxix. 117. And in nothing more than in this the holy force and effectual working of Faith and good Conſcience jointly, appears the *Power of Godlineſs*; I mean, when *Conſcience* judges rightly, according to the Divine rule, what is *Duty*, what

is

is *Sin*, and *Faith* over-aws or ſways the whole man to act accordingly: Both which may happily ſucceed, or come to paſs if we *underſtand*, *believe*, and in our particular practiſe *attend* unto, the Principles of Godlineſs, but never can otherwiſe. And this I may call the trueſt account of Sanctification, or Gods working Holineſs in the Hearts of men (and I may juſtifie my ſaying ſo, from the Apoſtles words, *Acts* xxvi. 18. *Sanctified through Faith, which is in Chriſt*): eſpecially, if I add hereto,

4. That, for the aſſerting *Godlineſs* into its *full power*, it is neceſſary, we not only, in ſome particular inſtances, conform our actions to the Chriſtian Law, but by conſtant endeavour of conſcientious obſervance, ſtudy to *habituate* our ſelves to ſuch *conformity*. We muſt *ſtir up the Grace of God in us*. (2 Tim. i. 6.) and rowſe all our ſtrength, if in any inſtances *Duty* or *obeying good*

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Conſcience ſeem at firſt difficult. It is Practice that makes men holy: I deny not Divine aſſiſtance or Grace, but rather ground all holy practice thereon. This only, I mean, *Godlineſs* gets not its due *power* over us, but by ſomething of Cuſtom and Exerciſe. We ſay commonly, *one Act does not denominate*, and indeed there is great reaſon; for neither does it much change a man: He's wicked with a witneſs, and ſo bad as ſcarce ever Man or Devil was found, who has not in ſome ſingle act or other complyed with the Dictates of good Conſcience: but there muſt be *frequent acts* of that ſort, to beget either a cuſtom or facility of ſuch compliance. So that I ſay, if we intend *Godlineſs* ſhall have *its power* on us, we muſt endeavour to inure our ſelves to ſuch honeſt conſcientious practice, as deſcribed: We muſt not idly expect I know not what inſpiration or infuſion of virtuous habits into our Souls,

Souls, but co-operate with the Grace of God towards the introducing them. It is the Apoſtles Command, *Exerciſe thy ſelf unto Godlineſs*, 1 Tim. iv. 7. And we need not doubt but the method will be ſucceſsful: Exerciſe thy ſelf to it, (ΓΎΜΝΑΣΕ ΣΕΑΥΤῸΝ ΠΡῸΣ) be practiſing daily in it, and it will obtain, through the Grace of God, a due power over thee.

The ſum then of what we have ſaid on this point is, to the end *Godlineſs* may have its *power* over any perſons, it is neceſſary, that the Principles of Godlineſs (that is the Doctrine of Chriſtian Faith and of Chriſtian Life) be *duly* by them *underſtood*, be *firmly believed*, be further *particularly* in practice *attended to*, and that laſtly they *endeavour to inure* themſelves into a *compliance* with them and *habitual obſervance* of them: for in this method and by theſe ſteps, it is rationally intelligible and accountable, how

how *Godlineſs* may obtain *power* over men; and in any other method to expect it, is a preſumptuous, not to ſay Enthuſiaſtical (though, God knows, too frequent an) Extravagance.

§. 3. Now by what we have thus diſcours'd, it is eaſie to collect, *when Godlineſs* may be ſaid to *have its due Power*; namely, when in a man the Belief of the Doctrine of Godlineſs, and good Conſcience prevail generally to regulate and govern the mans Life and Heart: or in plainer terms, if plainer can be, *When* (through the Grace of God, in ſuch method, as above ſet down) *the man is brought over, from a worldly, vain or looſe life, to a fix'd purpoſe of heart, not to allow himſelf in the Practice of any known ſin, nor in the neglect of any known Duty; and this purpoſe he firmly keeps to, and puts in practice, endeavouring withal to maintain perpetually ſuch a temper of mind whence may flow a Life ſo regular.*

lar: ſuch Perſons as theſe there are in the World; and in ſuch as theſe, I ſay, and in no others, let men pretend what they will, is the Power of Godlineſs to be found. All this will be moſt plain, and together fortified by the Evidence, if illuſtrated by an *Example* or two out of the Holy Scripture.

And, firſt, as to the prevalence of Godlineſs or good Conſcience ſo as to allow a mans ſelf in the practice of no ſin: A fitter inſtance cannot well be found than that of *Joſeph: Geneſ.* xxxix. The Temptation is well enough known; and the concurrence of Circumſtances ſuch as gave it a ſtrange recommendation: His age, he young; His condition, a Servant, and ſhe his Miſtriſs; The advantages likely to befall him hereby, *Nothing* already *was kept from him in the houſe but her.* (ver. 9.) This would have made him abſolute; Her importunity, *She ſpake to him day by day.* (ver. 10.) And

as

as to opportunity, *None of the men of the houſe were within.* (ver. 11.) Now ſee how the power of Godlineſs works (and ſo proportionably it will on ſuch occaſions wherever it is). In general, 1. He *underſtood the Doctrine of Godlineſs* and knew Adultery to be a great ſin and wickedneſs. (ver. 9.) 2. He not only Believes it to be ſo, but as to God, believes privacy could not conceal it from God; both theſe he expreſly profeſſes. *How ſhall I do this great wickedneſs and ſin againſt God?* 3. He particularly, amidſt all theſe conſpiracies of Tempters and Temptation, *attends* not only as we have ſeen to general *principles of Religion*, but to ſome perſonal obligations, which lay on him: "Behold my "Maſter hath committed all that "he hath to my hand, he wotteth "not what is in the houſe with me, "There is none greater in this houſe "than I, Nothing is withheld from "me but thee, becauſe thou art his

"Wife.

" Wife. (ver. 8, 9.) And now what is the iſſue? *He hearkned to her, as ſhe ſpake to him day by day*, not ſo much as to be with her. (ver. 10.) 4. In other terms, He *conforms to* the Divine Law and keeps cloſe thereto, not in a ſingle inſtance or two but with Conſtancy: nay when ſhe offered a kind of Violence to him, *and caught him by his garment, he fled and got him out, leaving his garment in her hand.* (ver. 12.) A glorious Precedent this! and wherein the Power of Godlineſs ſhines with a truely heavenly luſtre.

Again as to the Prevalence of Godlineſs, in not allowing a man in the *Neglect of any known duty*, we will take the Caſe of *Daniel.* Dan. vi. " A royal ſtatute and a firm Decree " according to the Law of the *Medes* " and *Perſians*, which altereth not, " was eſtabliſht, that whoſoever " ſhould ask a Petition of any God " or man for thirty days ſave of the " King, ſhould be caſt into the Den

" of

" of Lions. *v* 7. What? Live thirty days without Praying? Why, this a man ever touch'd with the power of Godlineſs could no more endure, than he could live thirty days without breathing. Whereſoever there is any thing of *Knowledg*, *Belief* or *Attention*, *of* or *to* the Doctrine of Godlineſs, this Neglect would not down; nor, as we ſhall ſee, notwithſtanding all the pleas fleſh and blood might make againſt the Lions Den, did it here. It was obvious, and undoubtedly not unſuggeſted by humane nature in *Daniel*, might not *ſecret* or *leſs ſolemn* (ſome would have thought, even *Mental*) *prayer* excuſed in this caſe? No, not in the preſent juncture: For now not praying as he uſed to do, and according to the then ſtanding Rule, *towards the Sanctuary in Jeruſalem* (1 King. viii. 33, 35, 38. &c.) *and with his windows open*, that he might look thitherwards, would have been diſowning his Religion, and as the import

of

of the Decree ran, a months renouncing his God; And this the good mans conſcience, no doubt, pronounced; The attending to thoſe Dictates, and complying therewith, not once or again, but in conſtant courſe, even when *He knew that the writing was ſigned, went into his houſe,* and his *windows* being *open in his Chamber* towards *Jeruſalem,* he *kneeled upon his knees* three *times a* day, and *prayed,* and *gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.* Dan. vi. 10. Behold here, how the power of Godlineſs prevails, for paying a known duty (towards God) againſt all contrary force and pleas.

I am not unawares, The *ſloth* and *lukewarmneſs* of the age, has here an obvious pretence in defence of going much lower than this, and yet ſatisfying the claim to the *power of Godlineſs.* Theſe precedents, it will be ſaid, were extraordinary, and theſe perſons had vertue to an *Heroical Degree,* as the term is; There

may be truly godly men of an inferiour order; as Starrs of the *ſixth*, are no leſs Starrs, than thoſe of the *firſt* Magnitude: But the Reply is as obvious; The Degree, wherein the *Power of Godlineſs* here appeared, bore only due proportion to the occaſion, and was but ſuch, as, in thoſe junctures of Temptation, to prevail. We, it may be, meet not, in our experience, with frequent inſtances of ſo illuſtrious exertions of the *Power of Godlineſs*; but neither haply with frequent inſtances of ſo violent temptations. God in his merciful providence conſiders us; He *is faithful, and does not ſuffer us to be tempted above what we are able. With the temptation he makes a way to eſcape* [ΠΟΙΕΙ ΣΥΝ ΤΩ ΠΕΙΡΑΣΜΩ ΤΗΝ ἘΚΒΑΣΙΝ] he provides with the temptation, an eſcape. 1 Cor. x. 13. But however ſuch inſtances may not have fallen much into our experience, yet ſuch undoubtedly there are; and it is to be hoped, *Godlineſs* in

in us is *powerful* enough, in caſe of our (that is, more ordinary) temptations, to prevail *againſt* known ſins, and *for* known duties: Truly, unleſs it be, it is in vain for us to flatter our ſelves, that *Godlineſs* has attained its *power* in us. According to our eſtate, ſuch *Integrity*, and ſuch *Conſtancy* too (generally) there muſt be, otherwiſe there is no *ſincerity*. *Then ſhall I not be aſhamed* [that is, then ſhall I not be found an Hypocrite; going about to deceive the world, God and my ſelf] when *I have reſpect unto all thy Commandments.* Pſal. cxix. 6. Let this then ſtand as an unſhaken and unmoveable truth, that *Wherever the Doctrine of Godlineſs is underſtood, believed, attended to and by honeſt endeavours complied with, there Godlineſs will, by Gods grace, obtain ſuch power and maſtery, as to prevail habitually againſt the Allowance of any known ſin, or the Neglect of any known duty.*

§ 4. Which bleſſed Victory will ſoon introduce a new face of things (as I may ſo ſpeak) throughout the ſoul of ſuch perſon: For a little of this courſe of life, or practice, will ſoon naturalize holineſs, and render the doing Gods Will the delight and joy of a mans heart. The *Commandments of God are not grievous*, but only to thoſe who never tryed them, or at the firſt beginning. All that difficulty, which affrighted us at firſt, ceaſes, when by doing well, and breaking off a courſe of Wickedneſs, or Formality, we have once taſted the pleaſures of true Religion. For beſides that inward Peace, which the practice of real Godlineſs and Virtue, in every particular act or inſtance of it, leaves behind, the contentment and ſatisfaction which a man muſt needs conceive from reflecting upon himſelf and conſidering

[*Quantum mutatus ab illo, Qui fuit.*]

how

how bleſſedly he differs from his late odious, liveleſs, hypocritical ſelf, will be found truly ſurpaſſing all former ſenſe of pleaſure, and even what he could expect. And then, caſt in hereto the Thoughts of a reconciled God, and of a moſt tenderly loving Saviour, the proſpect of enjoying theſe, and of a bleſſed Reſurrection, and of *Rewards which Eye has not ſeen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entred into the heart of man to conceive*; caſt in I ſay the rejoycings *in* and *from* this bleſſed Hope, and the ſum of all muſt needs be tranſporting, unſpeakable, and (deſerving really the Character which the Apoſtle gives it, 1 *Pet.* 1. 8.) *glorified joy*. Now I ſay theſe divine (and before, to ſuch a man, untaſted) pleaſures, being put into the Balance, againſt any ſeeming difficulties and auſterities in Religious practice, will infinitely preponderate,& render them all as the lighteſt trifles and inconſiderable; in a word

they will make the whole of a mans duty highly eligible, and therefore eaſie; ſo that he ſhall do it out of choice, with cheerfulneſs, nay with a kind of greedineſs of Soul. *I will run the ways of thy Commandments*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, (move with all facility, cheer and expedition in the courſe of my Duty) *when thou ſhalt enlarge my heart*. Pſal. cxix. 32. And whoſe heart may be ſaid enlarged, if not ſuch perſons hearts of whom we have ſpoken?

Nor is this at all hyperbolical, too great, or exceeding truth; but there is really a certain connaturalneſs of Holy practice to ſuch a mans heart. For conſidering the beforementioned particulars of due Knowledge, Belief, Heedfulneſs *of* and yielding *to* the ſubſtance of Religion, there cannot well but be, in the uſual temper of ſuch a mans mind, a compoſition and happy concurrence of all habitual advantages to an Holy and Pious life: ſuch as

are

are, a general *Serioufneſs, Tenderneſs,* and *Heavenly-mindedneſs.*

1. I ſay, A general *ſeriouſneſs,* or a grave, ſtaid, conſiderative ſpirit will uſually poſſeſs ſuch a mans breaſt. What I mean hereby, will eaſily, and diſtinctly, be underſtood, by its oppoſites: Now I oppoſe *ſeriouſneſs* not only to Debauchery and Irreligion, but to the Aiery, vain, heedleſs Humour of the Age; to a mind much unfixt, light and trivial, full of rambles, toys and uncertainties. The ſerious man then I take to be one, who, having firſt a *True ſenſe of things,* is generally *compoſed* enough to make actually a due eſtimate and choice of each, as occaſion offers. He is of the number of the Poets few,

[*Qui dignoſcere poſſunt*
Vera bona atq; illis diverſa]

who know true Goods and value all things as they are ſo, or tend to ſuch. And thus much certainly the

due knowledge, belief, and heeding the Principles of Religion muſt have produced in him: Theſe muſt needs have pois'd and fixt his Soul. Now how great an advantage is this, and how bleſſedly prepared for all holy and virtuous practice, is a ſerious mind!

2. There will be further in ſuch a perſon an habitual *ſoftneſs, tenderneſs*, or cedency of Heart. He will have a quick and ready ſenſe of all ſpiritual things, and however there may not be in him at all times an equal warmth of Affections, yet there will be a conſtant Reſentment, and, in ſome good meaſure, a befitting concernment of mind in all the affairs and buſineſs of Religion. I know ſome men will laugh at theſe terms, or pretences: but ſuch perſons muſt excuſe me, if I tell them roundly, they are ſtrangers to true Godlineſs, and all real Religion. There is undoubtedly ſuch a thing as

as a *ſpiritual ſenſe*, taſt or reliſh. *Doth not the ear try ſounds, and the mouth taſt meats?* Job xii. 11. Even ſo doubtleſs a Soul naturalized (as before) to heavenly Goods, has a reliſh for them and all things which conduce more immediately to them. Our Lord reprehends the want hereof in St. *Peter*, while yet too much a Novice in the Power of Godlineſs. Mat. xvi. 23. *Thou ſavoureſt not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.* But the thing it ſelf we may frequently obſerve in holy men upon Record. In *Joſiah*, 2 Chron xxxiv. 27. *Becauſe thy heart was* tender *and thou didſt humble thy ſelf before God, when thou heardeſt his words againſt this place and againſt the Inhabitants thereof, and didſt rend thy clothes and weep before me*, &c. In other language, He had a ready ſenſe of, and was affected with the Divine threatnings, as ſoon as heard. In thoſe Diſciples, Luk. xxiv. 32. *Did not our heart burn within*

within us, while he talked with us, by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures. And in the holy Pſalmiſt more generally. Pſal. cxix. 103. *How ſweet are thy words unto my taſt!* לחכי To my *Palate*, as if his Soul had ſuch an Organ; *yea ſweeter than honey to my mouth.* Many ſuch paſſages occur in that heavenly Book. In plain engliſh: A good man, whether he is to *Pray*, or *Hear*, or *Communicate*, or even in private to entertain himſelf in *Meditations*, or good *Books*, has an heart ſo accommodated and diſpoſed to theſe employments, as that the ſeveral parts of each Office, make ſuitable impreſſions on him, and naturally draw forth his Soul towards God, in acts of Reſignation, Humility, Faith, Hope, Joy, Love and Gratitude. And this Senſibleneſs & Pliantneſs of mind, thus affirmed, we cannot imagin but ſuch *Attention* to and *Compliance* with the ſum of Chriſtianity, together with

with ſuch general giving a mans ſelf up to God to walk before him, in the doing all known duty and avoiding all known ſin (as before ſaid) muſt needs produce. For as living in known ſin, ſears mens Conſciences, and renders their hearts obdurate, ſo by the rule of contraries, the endeavouring to *have a good Conſcience in all things* (as the Apoſtle calls the practice we ſpeak of, Hebr. xiii. 18.) muſt needs *ſoften* them, and of *ſtony*, make them *hearts of fleſh:* which, how great an advantage it is, and how far it facilitates (indeed much conſtitutes) an holy life, I need not ſpeak.

3. Upon theſe muſt needs alſo be conſequent a *general heavenly-mindedneſs*, a looking above the things of this world, above both the ſmiles and frowns thereof, yea even amidſt our worldly engagements or converſe; and a ſecret longing of Soul for that future, unſeen, bleſſed eſtate, which we know not yet what it is

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diſtinctly, but have believed? This part we cannot but conceive will be the product of ſuch qualifications and practices as we have before treated of: and all together muſt needs raiſe and ennoble the Soul, and fit it for the divineſt life it can be capable of in this ſtate. For ſuppoſe the Heart habitually *ſerious*, *tender* and *compliant* with all ſpiritual concerns, *breathing after* and *in love with* the *unſeen world*, What Chriſtian duty is there, which ſuch perſon is not fitted for? And as to the aſſiſtances of Divine Grace, it is ſure God is never wanting to thoſe, whom, by a courſe of his Grace and their improvements, he has thus prepared for the reception of more.

I think it now apparent by this method of Operations, through which we have traced the *Power of Godlineſs*, that it will bring men to this ſtate and temper. And I ſhall only add, That it will engage them alſo to endeavours of conſtant maintaining

taining and upholding the ſame; That their Reſolutions and Alacrity flag not, that their Seriouſneſs, Tenderneſs and Heavenly-mindedneſs decay not; in a word, That they fall not from this their Love of God and Holineſs. For it is a command as obligatory, and of as great concernment, as any can be preſum'd to be, Prov. iv. 23. *Keep thy heart with all diligence* (מכל משמר *Above all keeping*; whatever thou watcheſt not over, be ſure to watch over that) *For out of it are the iſſues of life*; Out of the *abundance* of it proceeds a mans eternal Weal or Wo.

§. 5. I would here conclude this Head, but that I ſuſpect ſome perſons (and thoſe haply not ill ones) will be apt to think, that ſtill this Diſcourſe runs too high; and will oppoſe againſt it that of *Solomon, There is no man which ſinneth not.* 2 Chron. vi. 36. *Not a juſt man upon earth that doth good and ſinneth not.* Eccleſ. vii. 20.

vii. 20. And the like paſſages of St. *James* and St. *John*, ſo well known, that they need not to be cited. And further, they may ſay, If there be any man of ſuch excellent temper as juſt now deſcribed, What is the reaſon, that we find ſome whom we take to be of the beſt of men, and in whom the *Power of Godlineſs* has undoubtedly had good effect, *complaining* notwithſtanding of the dulneſs, hardneſs and worldlineſs of their hearts? Though too many be, all are not Hypocrites in theſe *complaints*: nor are the Complaints meerly *Cant*.

My Anſwer hereto ſhall be, Firſt, By deſiring my expreſſions before may be carefully conſidered and not ſtrained beyond their import or my intention. I have ſaid, Men, in whom the *Power of Godlineſs* prevails, *Generally*, that is, For the *main*, *attend* unto the Chriſtian Doctrine and examine and judg ſuch actions as occur, thereby: that they comply with

with ſuch judgment, and *endeavour conſtancy* in ſuch compliance: that hereby they arrive at this pitch, not to allow themſelves in the *practice* of any known ſin, or in the *neglect* of any known Duty: and thence follows *generally*, or *habitually* ſuch a temper of heart as deſcribed. I did not ſay, nor do I mean, that, in ſome one or few ſingle inſtances, it is never otherwiſe in any of the particulars. *There came a Traveller* (2 Sam. xii. 4. that is, there entred an Act of Luſt which was a ſtranger there) *unto* David, and he was afterwards for a conſiderable time in a very *ſtrange* temper. But I do ſay now,

2. Such Lapſes, Miſcarriages or Crimes, and any internal diſtempers conſequent thereupon, in good men, proceed not doubtleſs from the *power of Godlineſs* in them, but from the Defect, interruption or ſome violent obſtruction of it: And if very good men too little expreſs,

or

or not conſtantly enough comply with, the *power of Godlineſs*, that will not warrant any perſon, either who is to teach it, for ſtating it too low, or who is to practice it, for not aiming above the faults of ſuch Precedents. And as to *David*'s caſe, it is ſure *David* did live and was *generally* what I have deſcribed; and though this Practice and this Temper were for a while, by that dreadful fall, interrupted, yet the power of Godlineſs prevailed again, and finally, ſo that he recovered and remaintained both. But as far forth as either failed, ſo far forth, at that time or times, came he ſhort of approving himſelf a perſon actuated by *the power of Godlineſs*: and in the great inſtance mentioned, there is no doubt, till his recovery, he forfeited both Gods Favour and all claim he could lay to be a Godly Man; though I do not think the *internal principle* of Holyneſs was thereby in him quite extinct; nor

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are *Habits* raſed out of the Soul of man, but as they are introduced, that is, by frequent practice or repetion of acts.

Laſtly and diſtinctly, as to what *Sins* may be conceived conſiſtent with the general prevalence of the Power of Godlineſs in man: For mine own part, I take *Sins* of *Ignorance* and of *Error* even under the Goſpel, to be Sins truly ſo called, and to ſtand in need, as well, on our hands, of a general Repentance (or Repentance of them in the lump, if I may ſo ſpeak) as of a Pardon on Gods: Now, that in the moſt godly men theſe are frequent, there is no doubt. And as to Sins of *ſurpriſal*, common *inadvertencies*, and at other times the *infirmities of Paſſions* ſeiſing us, together with the *Diſtempers of Mind*, Dulneſs, Flatneſs, Hardneſs in ſome meaſure, Diſcompoſedneſs, and what elſe may flow from ſuch originals (not allowed), there can be no queſtion, but they may

be, and are incident unto thoſe men, in whom the *Power* of *Godlineſs* moſt prevails. (For we are here *Men*, having Fleſh and Bloud about us, and not *Angels*): But as to *deliberate ſinning*, though the time of Deliberation ſhould be but ſhort, ſtill I ſtand to it, the *allowing* a mans ſelf *in any known Sin*, whether of *Commiſſion* or *Omiſſion*, is contrary *to*, irreconcilable *with* and (*in tantum*) for ſo much, deſtructive of the *Power of Godlineſs*; nor may any perſon, ſo allowing himſelf, conclude, while he ſo allows, or has not recovered himſelf by mature Repentance, that he is under the *Power of Godlineſs*, or Conduct of Gods Spirit, or indeed in a ſavable Condition. For, *know ye not, to whom ye yield your ſelves Servants to obey, his Servants you are to whom you obey, whether of Sin unto Death, or of Obedience unto Righteouſneſs.* Rom. vi. 16. Obſerve, this *yielding our ſelves to obey Sin* is, in it ſelf, *unto death*, and ver. 20.

Being

Being Servants of Sin ye are free from Righteouſneſs (out of a juſtified eſtate); for, (v. 21.) *the end of theſe things*, and (v. 23.) *the Wages of Sin is Death.* Nor do I doubt but in this Doctrine I am faithful, as well as tender, to the Souls of men.

§. 6. Now of theſe things, which on this head we have ſaid, the ſum is: *Godlineſs* (at leaſt as the world now ſtands) does not uſually get power over men but by ſeveral *degrees.* We are *firſt* brought to the *underſtanding* of, *then* to a *conviction* and *belief* of, the Doctrine of Chriſtian *Faith* and *Manners*; hereby *Conſcience* awakened as well as inlightned, *attends* its Office, judges and dictates aright; With theſe *dictates* the man *complies*, as ſwayed by what he is before ſuppoſed to believe; which Belief ſways not to comply only in ſome few ſingle inſtances, but to *endeavour* an *univerſal conformity* to good Conſcience and the Evangelical Law; the ſenſe

of both which are ſuppoſed by this time to be one and the ſame: From this conſtant and honeſt endeavour of ſuch conformity the rule of our Duty, proceeds a *Facility* and *Cheerfulneſs* in holy Practice; and from thence a *general ſeriouſneſs, tenderneſs* and *heavenlineſs* of mind.

Now, in as many as lead this life, though with a multitude of infirmities, to which Fleſh and Bloud is ſubject) I ſay the *Power of Godlineſs* appears; or, *Godlineſs* has obtained its *due Power*. For it has transformed ſuch mens Lives and Hearts: And though it has not ſet them above all Sin and all diſorders of mind, (which to do in this life is not the pretence of Chriſtianity); yet has it wrought out all the *old Leaven of Malice and Wickedneſs*, 1 Cor. v. 8. of vitious *Self-love*, of *Covetouſneſs, Pride, Diſobedience, Formality*, and the other evils taxed by the Apoſtle in the famous, 2 *Tim.* iii. 2, 3, *&c.* and repleniſhed their Souls with

with *Sincerity* and *Truth of Holineſs*, with an amiable and *heavenly temper*; which was the thing Godlineſs here was to effect. Therefore *in* and *on* ſuch, *Godlineſs*, through Divine Grace, has its due *Power*: And into this eſtate, may every one, who reads this, find himſelf transform'd. *Amen.*

CHAP. III.

Of Denying the Power of Godlineſs.

Sect. 1. *The Practices by which men* Deny the Power of Godlineſs, *reduced to two Heads.* Sect. 2. *The Particulars of the firſt.* Sect. 3. *The dreadful Nature of the ſecond.* Sect. 4. *Its Heighth, or Complement.* Sect. 5. *The Sum of all on this Head.*

§ 1. HAving now ſeen, by what means, and in what method, *Godlineſs* comes to have *Power* over men, as alſo when it may be ſaid to have its due *Power* (namely, whereſoever it directs and ſways our Practice, and by that means alters and new molds our Hearts). And having before in general ſo opened *Denying the Power of Godlineſs,*

neſs, as that it plainly appears to be a courſe of acting, oppreſſive of, and deſtructive to, the Power of Godlineſs, and therefore moſt contrary to that Divine Life but now delineated; we may, by what has been ſaid, eaſily collect its kinds and particulars, which will be deduced by a little Reflection. *Firſt*, if there be any practices, by which men may *obſtruct* or *ſtop* thoſe *ways* and *paſſages*, whereby the Principles of Godlineſs come at mens Hearts and get power over their Souls, thoſe certainly make up one kind or method of *Denying the Power of Godlineſs*. *Secondly*, being that in the preſent ſtate of things, Godlineſs doth not uſually get its due power over men in an inſtant, or by one ſingle effort, but by degrees; If therefore there be any other practices that may ſuppreſs the beginning, energy or operations, which ſuch Principles (having a little by ſurpriſe, or beſides mens Intentions and Wills, gotten

entrance unto natural Conſcience) have attained upon mens Spirits, and ſo choak and extinguiſh all holy warmth or Life, thoſe alſo will conſtitute another accurſed method of effecting the ſame: Of both, no doubt, there may be aſſigned Inſtances: But becauſe it cannot, I preſume, be well conceived, how the *Power of Godlineſs*, can be injured, but either by *hindring its entrance* and prevalence on the heart, or by *ſuppreſſing and overbearing it* where it has got ſome room or intereſt already, therefore I think all inſtances of *Denying the Power of Godlineſs* aſſignable may be reduced to theſe two heads. More cloſely then, I ſay, men are guilty of what the Apoſtle means by *Denying* (the word is ἠρνημένοι, *having denyed*) *the Power of Godlineſs*, when though they make an outward profeſſion of Religion, yet they take courſe to *ſtop all ways* by which true Religion may come inwardly

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to affect their Hearts: Or, in caſe it has already made ſome entrance and impreſſions, yea and had ſome conſiderable alterative effects upon them, yet they *overbear* and *ſtifle all dictates*, and, as far as they can, *all concernments* from it; ſo that, in the iſſue, their Lives are the ſame, as mens, that have no Religion at all, and too often only one or two removes from Barbarity: Civil they may be, but as little as well can be conceived (conſidering them civiliſed) of Natural virtue to be found in them: Such, God knows, is too great a part of the Chriſtian World!

§ 2. But particularly, as to the *former* general way of *denying the Power of Godlineſs*. If we reflect upon theſe gradations, by which, it was ſaid, Godlineſs obtains power over men, we may ſoon ſee, by what practices that *Power* is *obſtructed*. It obtains upon us, by our underſtanding its Principles, by our ſeeing and yielding to its evidences (that is,

is, believing the Chriſtian Doctrine) and by our attending thereto in the particulars of our Life. Therefore it is by us obſtructed, by all *Voluntary Ignorance*, Voluntary *Unbelief*, and Voluntary *Incogitancy*, or *Non-attention*, to what we know and believe: *Voluntary* I have ſaid; for what is ſo, is only an Humane Act properly; and what is not ſo, is more our Miſery (though but juſtly) than our Crime: But of each of theſe as voluntary, I ſhall obſerve *two* degrees, which though they are both, if perſiſted in, certainly deſtructive, yet not of equal guilt, and being to ſpeak,

1. As to *voluntary Ignorance*, I muſt take the liberty to ſay, in the beginning, that ſuppoſing Men not to be Ideots or Naturals, there can be little or no groſs Ignorance in point of Religion amongſt us, which is not voluntary: I will readily confeſs (and I heartily mourn for it before God) it is ſcarce conceivable,

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it is at leaſt incredible to ſuch who have not perſonally inquired into the common ſort, how profoundly ignorant a multitude of thoſe, who yet frequent our publick Aſſemblies, are, eſpecially in thoſe things which are purely points of Faith; and I muſt be ſo bold as to call even this Ignorance deſtructive: For, though we ſhould ſuppoſe the generality tolerably to underſtand the moſt neceſſary Duties, and conſequently to know what is more groſly ſinful, yet they being in the mean while ignorant of the Nature and Properties of God, of his Omniſcience, Power, Juſtice and Goodneſs, and very much of the Immortality of their own Souls, of the Doctrine of the Reſurrection, of the tranſcendency (or exceeding greatneſs) of the Rewards, and dreadfulneſs of the Puniſhments in that other world, *&c.* (which I ſay are all purely points of Faith) want all the great motives and incentives, which

ſhould

ſhould make the knowledge they have in points of Practice effectual to living well; that is, which ſhould give Godlineſs any conſiderable Power over them: And of ſuch points of Faith as theſe, I ſay the Vulgar (and I could wiſh only thoſe, who ſome account the Vulgar) are ignorant, *too commonly* even to ſtupidity. I do not ſay *allways:* God forbid! For, *ſæpe etiam ſub ſordido pallio ſapientia.* Many a poor man (in rags) has ſome plain notions, and a plain honeſt heart: But the complaint commonly, and in a very great amplitude, is juſter than any but the Devil and his Agents would wiſh it were: And if this be true of ſo many of thoſe, who attend the means of Knowledge, what may we ſay of thoſe, who totally neglect them. But be this Ignorance in which ſort ſoever, admitting my former ſuppoſition, that the perſons, in whom it is found, have their Intellectuals, I ſay,

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amongſt us, it muſt be *voluntary* in ſome degree or other. *Firſt*, Admit it proceed only from their *negligence, idleneſs, not caring for theſe things*; (They perhaps mind their Eaſe, enjoy themſelves and (as they ſpeak) *Live.* If their outward man fare but well enough, they are reſolved to truſt God with their Souls, and trouble not themſelves with that concern; or whether they be reſolved ſo or no, 'tis ſure they do ſo:) Suppoſe, I ſay, theſe men ignorant, this their Ignorance is voluntary: For the negligence or ſloth whence it proceeds is of their own choice, and therefore muſt its ſeveral conſequents and fruits be ſuch alſo, of which Ignorance is one of the moſt immediate inſtances aſſignable.

But there is a more *affected and reſolute* ſort of *Ignorance* in the world than this, which I can call no better than downright *Atheiſm* or *Irreligion:* that I mean which is to be

be found in ſome, who conſidering that Chriſtianity is an enemy to a ſenſual, voluptuous, lewd life, and that Conſcience is an uneaſie portage to a man deſigning ſuch life, reſolve never to trouble their heads with the underſtanding or comprehending ſuch Doctrines, which ſo much diſturb them, and, as they will tell you, embroil the world: Theſe men ſtudy Ignorance for the ſake of a ſtupid Quiet, and deſignedly abandon and defie all means of Religious Knowledge: A deſperate ſort of blind men indeed!

Now there is no doubt but both and all theſe, our *Church ignorants*, and our *Outlying-ignorants*, and that whether through *ſupine negligence* and *ſloth*, or through *reſolute deſign* and *obſtinacy*, all of them, I ſay, *Deny the Power of Godlineſs*, whatſoever they may have or retain of the *Form*: For they ſtop the very firſt paſſage by which *Godlineſs* can come at their hearts, or ever have

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any *power* over them; namely they ſuffer it not to enter into their *Underſtandings*.

2. Men obſtruct (and ſo *deny the Power* of *Godlineſs* by *voluntary Unbelief*: And I muſt here ſay the ſame of the *Unbelief* of this Age, which I did juſt now of its *Ignorance*. There is (ſpeaking only of ſuch who have their Senſes) little or no *groſe Unbelief* to be found amongſt us, which is not *voluntary*; it being generally matter of mens choice either in it ſelf directly, or indirectly in its cauſes: If men affect Ignorance and ſo believe not, either becauſe they underſtand not the Doctrines to be believed, or ſee not the Evidences which perſwade them, who ſhall ſay that Unbelief is not choſen, when the Ignorance, whence it derives, is apparently ſuch? But if any, who both underſtand the Chriſtian Doctrine, and are acquainted with the *Evidences*, upon which it is pretended to be believed,

lieved, do yet withſtand and cavil at thoſe Evidences, endeavouring to find or make flaws in them, whereas in truth there are none, and then diſpute touching their *inſufficiency*, expoſing them, and demanding *Evidences* either *impoſſible* (that is ſuch which the nature of the Cauſe admits not) or *unreaſonable*; if, I ſay, any men, in theſe circumſtances and thus acting, believe not, it is plain ſuch mens *Unbelief* is matter of Induſtry, Endeavour, and Deſign, and ſo not only of deliberate, but obſtinate choice. Now ſuch *perverſe* ſpirits may be found now a-days too rife, as well as thoſe more *lazy Unbelievers* before mentioned: And both ſorts undoubtedly deny the *Power of Godlineſs*; for both obſtruct the perſwaſion of its reality in their hearts, without which perſuaſion, it is plain, Religion muſt be but an inſignificant pretence, of no prevalence or force.

Laſtly

Laſtly, men may hinder and ſo *deny the Power of Godlineſs*, by a *voluntary Heedleſneſs*: It will look ſomewhat hard perhaps, in the judgment of moſt, to call all the Inadvertencies and Incogitancies which, in common converſation, betray men into ſin, *voluntary* ones; inaſmuch as many ſeem meerly caſual, others after a ſort neceſſary, and natural Infirmities. And again on the other ſide, men ordinarily give themſelves ſo great a looſe, and even the beſt, ſo much remit that holy Sollicitude and Watch, which they ought conſtantly to maintain over themſelves, that it will be difficult moſt times to ſay touching this or that particular inadvertent fit, it is not at all *voluntary* (I would be underſtood to ſpeak of men awake, and in their Senſes, Health and the like) that is, as in the former caſes, neither choſen in its ſelf nor cauſe. In plain terms, we ſo far abandon our Minds and Hearts

to the World and Vanity, or we indulge our Pleaſures and Appetites ſo much, that theſe draw, and ſtrangely detain, or enſlave, our Thoughts: And while we ſo intently and conſtantly purſue ſuch Objects, if unawares and inadvertently we are ſurpriſed with ſinful concernments, paſſions and engagements about them, who can avow that *inadvertency* no whit *voluntary*, when the indulgence, which drew it on, was plainly ſo?

But this may ſeem leſs culpable in theſe our days, and perhaps to ſome very venial and excuſable: For, alas! how few are there, who, in this particular, are not guilty, more or leſs, of *denying the Power of Godlineſs?* As therefore we complained before of a deſigned Ignorance and Unbelief, ſo muſt we here of ſuch a thoughtleſs unconcerned temper, wch is matter of ſome mens ſtudy and endeavour: To be ever Airy and free from any intent thought,

thought, void of all ſollicitudes and (what they call) *eaſie* to a mans ſelf, but eſpecially to be above all religious apprehenſions and concernments; that is, in plain Engliſh, to put little or *no difference* between what we call *moral good or evil*, ſome men look upon as a great pitch of happineſs: Whereas therefore thoughtfulneſs does breed concernment, and bring men to put a difference betwixt Actions, they endeavour by all means, they well can, to hinder the Entrance of thought into them. They take care not to be alone, nor in ſerious thoughtful company; They divert themſelves to other buſineſs, or rather poſſibly to Jollity or Madneſs; they ſay to Conſcience, when about to dictate to them Duty, or forbid them Sin, as *Felix* to St. *Paul* (*Act.* xxiv. 25.) *Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient ſeaſon I will call for thee.* This is indeed an heinous ſort of obſtructing the *Power of Godlineſs:*

Such reſolute heedleſneſs, as this, may ſeem rather a *ſuppreſſing the Power of Godlineſs*, already partly in poſſeſſion, than an *obſtructing the paſſages* by which it is to enter. But let it be ſtiled how, or ranked under what ever head it ſhall, it is ſurely a practice very common, and a dangerous, well nigh deſperate, method of *denying the Power of Godlineſs*.

§. 3. But there is yet *another kind* more dreadful, and which exceeds all the former, as well in Guilt, as in audacious or daring Violence; namely, when men, though they have not been able to keep out of their minds all notices and belief of Religion, nor it may be are able (though they do endeavour, as thoſe before) to ſuppreſs, exterminate or baniſh the frequent recurring dictates of awakened Conſcience, (this poſſible ſo haunting them that they hear its voice whether they will or no) ſhall yet notwithſtanding

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ing all, for the love of ſome long-courted Pleaſure or Profit, control all theſe Dictates, and in a *reſolved courſe of ſin* overbear all oppoſition from them: They ſtand in their own hearts convinced, haply, both of the nature and obligation of their Duty, ſo as to have nothing of ſound Reaſon to object againſt it; They want not Arguments or Motives to recommend their Duty or diſſuade their beloved Sin, but the plain Truth is, they are unwilling to part with their Sin, and ſo no Argument will move them. For they have long heard of the *Wrath of God revealed*, and to be revealed *from Heaven againſt all Ungodlineſs and Unrighteouſneſs of men, who hold the Truth in Unrighteouſneſs:* Rom. I. 18. which means has been effectual to aſſert Godlineſs into its due power in others, and even theſe men themſelves, whether they will or no, cannot very oft but give credit to theſe Doctrines; yea they run in their

minds, more than they deſire they ſhould: Yet ſo addicted are they to their curſed Luſts, ſo have they ſold themſelves to ſerve ſenſual bruti∫h Appetite, or a worldly Mind, that, notwithſtanding all *Remora's* and Diſſuaſives, on they run, and venture Judgment and Damnation, all Wrath preſent and to come: Sometimes haply they will ſet their Wits to work for the palliating and and extenuating the Sins they have addicted themſelves to, for the finding out plea's and excuſes to retain them a while, nay it may be for the making of them no Sins, but only matters of Chriſtian Liberty; they will ſeek Knots in Bulruſhes, ſtudy little flaws in the Arguments with which Religion comes preſſed upon the Souls and Practice of mankind: And if any ſuch thing they ever find, Oh! how they magnifie it! and inſult poſſibly a while over Religion and Religious men: In the mean while, nothing do they find,

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or can they find, which can finally ſatisfie the daily and perhaps hourly oppoſitions from within, but againſt theſe they proceed in a manner like *Phraoh with an high hand:* I mean they *ſin deliberately*, and deliberately *live in ſin*, againſt Light and Conſcience. They neither would (or perhaps for Wickedneſs ſcarcely could) live any otherwiſe, if they had never heard of Religion, or if there were no ſuch being as a *God*, either to *fear* or *worſhip*. This indeed is a dreadful ſort of *denying the Power of Godlineſs*, and which falls, but in one point (namely of Malice or Spight againſt God and his Goſpel) ſhort of what many Proteſtant Divines (how truly I muſt not here ſtand to ſpeak) have conceived to be the *Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt*, or *unto Death* and unpardonable. Yet, God knows, this Practice is ſo frequent in the Chriſtian World, at leaſt in ſome degrees of it, that we can ſcarce find a City, Pariſh, or

even Village, in which ſome may not be found guilty of it, as in the next Chapter will perhaps be urged.

§. 4. It pleaſes God indeed ſometimes, in his juſt Judgment, to ſuffer ſome ſuch *bold Sinners*, as theſe, to go on to that *height*, that they in a ſort ſin away Conſcience, and extinguiſh the *Candle of the Lord*, which has ſo long been ſmothered by them. Even as *they have not liked to retain* God *in their knowledge* [ἐν ἐπιγνώσει in their *acknowledgment*: when they knew his Nature and Will, they refuſed to acknowledge it, or yield obedience] *God has given them over to a reprobate mind, to do thoſe things, which are not convenient*, Rom. I. 28. They grow *paſt feeling*, Epheſ. iv. 19. they *harden themſelves*, till *God* at length *harden* them, that is, till he leave them to themſelves and their own hardneſs, reſolving his Grace ſhall never have more to do with them. Such as theſe indeed have *denyed*

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the Power of Godlineſs as far as in themſelves it is poſſible: for they have *ſuppreſs'd* it, till they have *deſtroy'd* it. A dreadful heighth is this! Nor can we conceive any greater complement, or further degree, of *denying the Power of Godlneſs*, to which men can proceed, than this is, except we ſhall ſuppoſe, ſome of theſe deſparate wretches to attempt in others, what they have effected in themſelves; namely, to endeavour the debauching other mens Conſciences, and, as far as they can, extinguiſhing in the World the Senſe of God, and all Religion. It is too certain ſome ſuch miſcreants, or monſters of men, are to be found, *who knowing the Judgment of God (that they which commit ſuch things are worthy of Death) not only do the ſame, but have pleaſure in them that do them*; Romans I. 32. nay, have pleaſure in having made them as ſenſleſs and deſperate as themſelves; becauſe perhaps by their being made

ſuch,

ſuch, there are ſo many fewer in the World to condemn, and ſo many more to patronize, their villanous Practices. But this is a *denying the Power of Godliniſs*, which will ſcarce conſiſt with having ſo much as *the Form* of it, and which therefore does not ſo properly fall under our preſent conſideration.

§. 5. Thus then the ſeveral *ways, methods* or *degrees*, by which men *deny the Power of Godlineſs*, whether by *obſtructing* & hindring *its coming in* upon their Souls, or by *ſuppreſſing* and overpowering *its attempts*, where it already has ſome place, with the particulars under each, have been repreſented: If what has been ſaid of this Subject, becauſe thus carefully deduced and branched out, ſhould be leſs underſtood or not ſufficiently comprehended by any *plain Reader*, not uſed to Partitions or Diſtinctions, the ſum of all is, *For any man, who calls himſelf or pretends to be a* Chriſtian, *to live*

live a diſorderly, vitious or unchriſtian Life, to be prophane *and generally negligent of God and Religion, to be* unjuſt, uncharitable *and* unmerciful, *to be* impure, *lewd, or* otherwiſe debauched *in his private manners; nay, though theſe things do not openly and ſcandalouſly appear in him, yet, for him, betwixt God and himſelf, ſecretly* to allow himſelf in any known ſin, *thinking lightly of Hell Torments, or not priſing Heavens Joys; Nay, to have ordinarily* a vain, worldly, carnal Heart, *untouch'd and unaffected with heavenly Goods or Religious concernments; for any perſon amongſt us, I ſay, to lead ſuch a Life, or carry ſuch an Heart, is in the Apoſtles Language* to deny, *or to have* denyed, the Power of Godlineſs; *yea though ſuch perſons ſhould be never ſo often, or never ſo long every day at his Devotions: and the Apoſtles Terms or Language is moſt true and juſt; For* this Life *and* this Heart *are as* contrary *as any thing*

thing can be to Godlineſs, *and even to all Religious Pretences and Offices.*

CHAP. IV.

The preſent Age generally guilty of Denying the Power of Godlineſs.

Sect. 1. Cautions *fror preventing ſome* Abuſes, *which may be made of this Proof.* Sect. 2. *The* firſt part *of the Charge proved.* Sect. 3. *The* ſecond *proved.* Sect. 4. *Pretended* Alleviations *of our Guilt herein removed.* Sect. 5. *A Corroborative of the former Proof.* Sect. 6. *Some Reflections on the publick Manners, which may vindicate the former Cenſure.* Sect. 7. *A Tranſition to what remains.*

§. 1. TIme it is at length to put all together, for the making good the *Charge* above laid upon *the*

the preſent Generality of Chriſtians. Now becauſe there can be no due Proof in this matter, without ſome view of the publick Manners, I muſt here deſire none be offended, if I ſpare *no Party* of thoſe who pretend to Godlineſs. The Faithfulneſs I ow to the Souls of men, beſides the nature of my Deſign, will not permit I ſhould: Neither let any man judge me cenſorious, uncharitable, or ill-natured, either in my undertaking or way of arguing: I only avow plain matter of fact, notorious in the ſenſe of all ſerious and judicious Chriſtians, and infer from thence, what if Scripture be true, and ſuch Notoriety admitted, is undeniable: I judge not the Heart or Thought of any particular perſon, but only according to my Duty reprove and warn, upon what (to me at leaſt) openly appears: and all this with a deſign of *amending mens Lives*, of *advancing Godlineſs*, and *preventing* the *Ruin of* immortal

tal *Souls, for* whom *Chriſt died,* and to whom he has been *preached.* And as I my ſelf take not upon me, to cenſure any man in particular, ſo let not any Reader unskilfully or uncharitably apply that to *others,* in judging them to be the men meant, which was deſign'd for each man to judge *himſelf* by. I teach not, nay, in the Name of God, I forbid, men to *judge one another*; and in the ſame Name I require and conjure them not to *flatter themſelves.* 'Tis better to ſee my ſelf guilty of a meer *Form of Godlineſs and denying the Power of it,* at preſent, and while I may redreſs it, than that the whole World, as well as my ſelf, ſee it one day, to my own irrevocable and irremediable confuſion. Having given here theſe *Cautions,* I will now be plain.

§. 2. We ſaid above, varying a little the Apoſtles Words, for perſpicuities ſake, *That the great buſineſs of the generality of men in the matter*

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of Religion is at preſent fairly to raiſe and maintain a Form of Godlineſs; which we made the firſt particular of the Charge: Now, in order to the making this good, we have opened the moſt uſual *Pretences, Claims and Practices* by which a *Form of Godlineſs* has been, or perhaps can be ſet up and maintained: And whereas there are a ſort of idle, eaſie and (too commonly) looſe people living amongſt us, which are, by Courteſie of the Country, called Chriſtians, and are contented well enough with the Name, never troubling themſelves what Chriſtianity means (they would perhaps have been as much *Mahumetans*, had that been the Religion of the Country, as they are *Chriſtians*) we will not at preſent concern our ſelves with theſe: But taking to examination the Caſe of them, who ſeem to look upon Religion as a matter of moment and really profeſs it, having therefore addicted themſelves to one

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Church or other, ſhall we be able, with truth, to ſay any better of the generality of them, than this branch of the Charge amounts to? Let us then put together three or four of the particulars ſpecified, to conſtitute a *Form of Godlineſs*, and ſee, even fairly judging, if thoſe give us not, as far as man can ſee the compaſs, or *ne plus ultra* of their Religion.

Suppoſe we then a Profeſſor in his own thoughts well, and indifferently according to the rate of common people, to underſtand Religion, and as his Genius, Inclination or Intereſt perhaps leads him, to have addicted himſelf to this or that Church (as we ſpeak): If now he ſhall be zealous for the way, or diſtinctive Opinions, of that his Party, does he not look upon himſelf, is he not look'd upon by many others, as a fairly accompliſh'd Chriſtian? I do not yet ſay many particular perſons have no more Religion than this comes

comes to; but I do demand, Does not this ſuffice to paſs one for a modern Godly man? And does not common Experience every day verifie it does? But if beſides, ſuch perſon be a man of what they call *Gifts*, and no wiſe infamous for thoſe, which are uſually accounted *ſcandalous Sins*, (though he be inwardly fraught with others of a cleanlier nature, at leaſt, in ſome mens eyes) not ſorting himſelf therefore with men of an ordinary converſation, but keeping cloſe to thoſe of his own ſtamp, and crying out of the Lewdneſs of the world, ſuch an one ſhall ſoon be vogu'd for an eminent Saint, Good God! how great a multitude go no farther? I do not here ſay, This or That man is meerly ſuch as I have deſcribed: I am not therefore guilty of cenſoriouſneſs: I am yet only putting theſe things to mens Conſciences; let them judge whether they are ſuch or not: If they are, I produce their Conſciences as Wit-

neſſes in my Cauſe: If they are not, I ſhall anon prove enough for my deſign, there are a multitude of others are: I only ſay at preſent, this is abundantly ſufficient amongſt divers parties to gain a man the reputation and intereſt of a *Godly man.* Whereas I think they act much more like Chriſtians, as well as wiſe men, who, though they hope charitably of all men, as far as Scripture permits, yet determine not who are Gods Saints, much leſs cry men up for ſuch, in whom under a fair, but thin, Varniſh of Godlineſs, appears a great deal of *private falſneſs, juggling, pride, malevolence* to the far greateſt part of their Chriſtian Brethren, with many like known Sins (at leaſt againſt men) which are utterly inconſiſtent with an uniform, conſcientious Chriſtian Practice.

Amongſt another ſort, let a man be but outwardly agreeable to the *Eccleſiaſtical Laws and Orders,* let him

him duly frequent his *Pariſh Church* (which it were to be wiſht all would do, for though this be far from being the whole, which the Power of Godlineſs is to bring men to, yet this is the ready way to bring them under the Power of Godlineſs wholly) let him beſides live quietly and fairly amongſt his neighbours, and this man ſhall paſs for a Chriſtian of a very good rate: He ſhall think himſelf ſo, and be generally thought ſo by his Neighbours; and yet, here perhaps is the ſum of his Religion. But then if he ſhould beſides have a *Zeal* for this *excellent Church*, into which it has pleaſed God to caſt him (though it would grieve a man to ſee many times how prepoſterouſly and indiſcreetly even ſome honeſt mens Zeal acts) who ordinarily of the ſame Church will deny ſuch perſon to be a Chriſtian of a very good rank? And truly I muſt not ſay but that men of this Character are neerer the Kingdom of Heaven,

in my judgment, than thoſe of that before deſcribed: For here is much real Virtue, which, becauſe ſuck'd in with Chriſtianity and by Chriſtian Education, I dare not call, as ſome in an ill ſenſe do, purely *moral* or *natural* virtue: And yet I muſt confeſs, it may ſo come to paſs, that here alſo, as well as in the caſe I have cenſured worſe, may be nothing beyond *a Form of Godlineſs*: and God knows, how often does it ſo come to paſs! Let it but be conſidered ſeriouſly how vaſtly ſhort or different all theſe Qualifications mentioned are from a *due underſtanding and cordial belief of Chriſtianity*, from *an habitual regard* and *general conſcientious conformity to the Chriſtian Rule*, from that *ſerious, tender, heavenly temper*, which are the due effects of *the Power of Godlineſs*, as has been above ſet forth.

To be free, and ſpeak out how matters ſtand, as well with the profeſſing multitude, of the *Diſſenters*, as

as of the *conformable* people; When a Miniſter comes to talk home to either, of examining all actions by the Evangelical Law, of allowing a mans ſelf in no known ſin, no not in the moſt cleanly, faſhionable or our moſt beloved ones, they ſhall many of them ſtare and wonder at him; and, if they underſtand him, be apt to ask, Do you pretend there are any ſuch men alive? Is not this a pitch of perfection for another ſtate? Tell them further, That, beſides their outward actions, they are to look to the inward temper and diſpoſition of their Hearts; that in all Offices God more regards this, than the outward performance; 'tis very well, if one in more than I will name know what you mean. They who are to inſtruct common people perſonally, in order to their Salvation, know this to be a ſad truth. God forbid, but that I ſhould think, even amongſt ordinary plain people there are diverſe who can give a

better account of themſelves; and many more, who underſtand, and have a ſenſe of a great deal more than they are able to expreſs: but that will eaſily be diſcern'd by any prudent perſons, who have to deal with them in their ſpiritual concerns: Notwithſtanding I ſtill inſiſt upon this, that there is no one of Experience, Judgment, and Sincerity in the Work of the Miniſtry, but will confeſs things generally ſtand as I have ſtated them: It is the great complaint in which we all joyn, and under the apprehenſion of which we mourn, that the ſenſe of God and Religion is grown a very rare thing in the world. This then being admitted as a truth (as, upon common experience, conſidering particularly the practice and ſtate of the Age, it muſt be) that even the generality of thoſe who profeſs to be concern'd in Religion (or to make Religion a great part of their buſineſs in life) are only imployed

in

in ſome outward Offices and parts of it, or haply ſome empty pretences to it, being in the mean while very ignorant, what the due effects of *the Power of Godlineſs* are, and unaffected or unexperienced *in*, and for the main unſenſible *of*, the methods by which Godlineſs obtains power over men, it follows, *That the great buſineſs of the generality of men in the matter of Religion at preſent is, fairly to raiſe and maintain a Form of Godlineſs*; which was the firſt part of the Charge.

§. 3. And from the ſame Evidence, the *Second Part* is is moſt eaſily concluſible: For if common and ſad Experience ſpeak the generality of thoſe who profeſs Religion to be of ſuch temper, as ſaid, and that there be on all hands few (comparatively) who have a real ſenſe of Godlineſs, certainly few there needs muſt be, who are careful *to live conform to the Chriſtian Law or Rule*; for without ſuch ſenſe, and it deeply

too imprinted on, and daily kept alive in, the heart, this never will be done.

And again, if of the multitude of Profeſſors on all hands, as above, very few (comparatively) *underſtand* what a *Chriſtian Frame and Spirit* mean, and, we will add, as little *value* it; if further, they underſtand not the ways of getting or keeping the ſame (all which are partly evident before, partly conſequent upon one another) then muſt the getting and keeping ſuch Spirit be the *Care* and *Exerciſe* of very few (comparatively): foraſmuch as it cannot be conceived, men ſhould make that matter of their Care and Exerciſe, which they neither underſtand nor value. Nay (which reduces the paucity yet to a narrower compaſs) too many of thoſe, who have knowledge enough to qualifie them for this temper, are wanting in their *diligence*, both to get and keep it, that is,

is, they maintain not a *conſtant* and conſcientious *endeavour of Conformity to the Chriſtian Law.*

Wherefore *the gaining and keeping a true Chriſtian Spirit, and living conform to the Chriſtian Law or Rule, is the Care and Exerciſe of very few*; which was the *ſecond part* of the *Charge.* And ſo, what the Apoſtle foretold of the *laſt days*, appears to be ſadly verified in theſe, *The generality have a Form of Godlineſs, but deny the Power of it.*

§. 4. I know it will be *pleaded*, in *mitigation* of this guilt, that much of it is due to *Ignorance*; for ſo, it will be ſaid, it has been argued in the Proof. Now it will be hard to plead mens *Ignorance* to be matter of ſuch dreadful *Guilt*, when Ignorance ordinarily imports rather Infirmity.

I *anſwer* hereto, though I made uſe of the multitudes ignorance in Spirituals, as what ſeemed to me the moſt obvious convincing argument

ment to prove the Age generally very guilty of *Formality*; yet it will not follow that all the Formality of the Age, much leſs all the Sin that accompanies and flows from it, proceeds from Ignorance. There has been enough ſaid above, of *oppreſſing Conſcience, overpowering its dictates,* and *holding the truth in unrighteouſneſs,* to take off ſuch trifling excuſes and extenuatory Plea's as theſe.

Beſides, though it were admitted, moſt of our *Formality* did come from the peoples *Ignorance*; yet the Queſtion will be, Whoſe *fault* is that *Ignorance*? Theſe very perſons we charge, have knowledge enough to ſet up and maintain a *Form of Godlineſs.* How came they by that knowledge, but from the Goſpel? And does not that Goſpel moſt plainly preſent unto us the whole Chriſtian *Faith* and *Law*; and that with Evidences ſufficient to perſuade the *Belief* of the one and enforce the

the *Practice* of the other? Doth it not require us, to *try* our *ſelves* and *actions* thereby? In a word, *Hath not this, the Grace of God bringing Salvation, appeared* [or been made manifeſt] *unto all of us? Teaching us, that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly and godlily in this preſent world?* Can there be found on Earth ſuch an Enemy to the empty *Form of Godlineſs*, or ſuch an inſtrument to convey the *Power of Godlineſs* into mens Hearts, as the Goſpel? If we are *ignorant* therefore, and, being ignorant, *formal* and *ſenſleſs* in to the bargain, the greater is our Sin: Our *Ignorance* is, and needs muſt be, *voluntary* and choſen: ſo muſt our *unbelief*, our *heedleſneſs*, our *unconcernedneſs*, our *formality* and our very *denying the Power of Godlineſs*: And whether we have run into this guilt through *ſloth* and *negligence*, or *perverſeneſs* and *obſtinate deſign*, it is but reflecting on what has been a-

bove-

boveſaid, and inquiring into our own Conſciences anſwerably, and we may fitly take the meaſure of our ſtature in ſin.

§. 5. Indeed ſo far have I been from ſtraining truth, in ſetting forth the guilt of the preſent Age in this caſe, that the numbers of thoſe who are guilty are greater than has yet been repreſented: I have been able to conclude the Charge juſt, conſidering only that portion of men who amongſt us ſeem to make Religion ſomewhat of their buſineſs and concernment: But how great a part may we find within the pale of the Church, who indeed call themſelves *Chriſtians*, at leaſt are content people ſhould reckon them in to the common number of thoſe, that profeſs the Religion of the Country, whom truly any man vers'd abroad in the world, would not account, by their manners, to be ſo much as civil *Turks* or *Heathens*. In truth, as the world goes, we muſt acknowledge

ledge within our bowels *three rates* of *Chriſtians*: We have firſt *Chriſtians* only in *Name*; We have, ſecondly Chriſtians in *Name* and *Form*; and undoubtedly there are amongſt us, if on Earth, Chriſtians in *Name*, *Form* and *Reality*: We have ſpoken hitherto only of the two later, and, taking them both as part of one aggregate and blended body, we have found, upon due conſideration, thoſe whom we call *Chriſtians in Name and Form* (that is, ſuch, who have a *Form of Godlineſs* but *deny the Power*) to be ſo far the greater number, that we have in compariſon of the other, as I apprehend, juſtly ſtiled them the *Generality*; ſo ample a majority, God knows, do they appear to be! Now though it may be judged, we cannot, with the ſtrict-propriety, ſay, thoſe *who have only the Name of Chriſtians* (which are the firſt of the three ſorts) *have a Form of Godlineſs*; yet we may ſafely avow, they do *deny the Power of Godli-*

Godlineſs. If then we add *this number* to that former *Generality* we found guilty, How great amongſt us will be the *total* of thoſe who *deny the Power of Godlineſs*?

§. 6. Thoſe who think this too ſevere, I deſire with me ſeriouſly and ingenuouſly, without any thing of partiality on the one hand, or of ill-natur'd rigour on the other, to conſider a little the *publick manners*: And we'll begin with the *publick Devotions*. Such, who are moſt ſerious in the Worſhip of God, full well know, that for the main they appear outwardly therein rather better than what they are: That is, the wild extravagant thoughts, the Dulneſs and other diſorders, which, to their great grief, infeſt their Hearts, are not viſible in their Mein and Faces: And, proportionably to themſelves, they may conclude generally, few or none appear there worſe than they are: Now particularly let us reflect upon, or ſet before our eyes

a while, the common Behaviour of people in many of thoſe, which are, or ſhould be, our moſt *ſolemn Aſſemblies:* How different is it from what it ſhould be, how unbecoming, and therefore unbeſpeaking, a ſenſe of Godlineſs! This, thoſe, who make it moſt their buſineſs, to obſerve nothing there but God and their own Duty, cannot often, whether they will or no, but have taken notice of; and let it be reputed but an honeſt and well-meaning freedom, to repreſent it throughout. *Our Service,* for which all our people generally pretend great Reverence (and it were to be wiſh'd they would all judiciouſly pay it) conſiſts of divers excellent and admirably contrived pieces: Now firſt, as to that part of it, which is properly and ſtrictly *Prayers:* this indeed perhaps the generality ſhall repeat (too often heedleſly mutter over) after the Miniſter; with what underſtanding appears (commonly) by their repeating

peating what they *ſhould not* (the Miniſters part, *Abſolutions*, *&c.*) as well as what they *ſhould*: I will not ſpeak of their idle gazings, and other vain actions (too plainly uttering the abundance of their Hearts) while their Lips are going. Then, the *Leſſons* ſerve for intervals of whiſpering or obſerving Strangers, or their Neighbours Habits, paſſing Complements, *&c.* The *Hymns* and *Anthems* too generally are attended to meerly for the Muſick; and afterwards ſomewhile, the buſineſs is admiring and extolling the Compoſition; or paſſing ſentence on the Performers, Organ, or the like: Then for the *Sermon*, it is ſcarce well begun before ſome have plainly and deſignedly compoſed themſelves to ſleep; Another ſort are employed in cenſuring and haply ridiculing the Preacher, in idle Diſcourſes, mutual Careſſes, not refraining ſometimes Laughter and Sports, not to ſay downright Buffonry: Let none

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here miſconſtrue me; I cenſure nothing of the *Order* or conſtituted courſe of *our Church Servite*, which I ſtill ſtand to to be very heavenly & tranſcendent, and have elſewhere vindicated both it, through its ſeveral parts, and the appointed uſage of it; I only here reprove, and, for amendment, expoſe, mens lewd abuſe: In plain terms, I beſeech ſome ſorts of people, even for Gods ſake, that they will make *a difference* betwixt *a Church* & a *Playhouſe*, betwixt *Gods Worſhip* & *an Opera*; If Religion prevail not hereto, methinks good Manners ſhould: Were a perſon delivering an Errand, nay it may be but telling a ſet ſtory to a private number of men, it would be look'd upon as an affront, ſhould here two or three, or there as many, be whiſpering, laughing, or otherwiſe entertaining of themſelves than by attention: Certainly he who *reads the Scripture*, he who *preaches it*, comes to the World upon the moſt

ſolemn errand in the world: Pardon therefore the Language; Let men be *Civil to God Almighty,*

I may not here conceal, that it is very ſuſpicious, a multitude come to Church with no other ends than thoſe of *Vanity* and *Divertiſement*, if not worſe; Their ſtrange Dreſſes, their gariſh Attire, fitter for perſons whom I will not name than ſuch as come to a Chriſtian Aſſembly; in a word, the whole Garniture and all Accoutrements they come with, many, I mean, even of both Sexes, are ſuch as beſpeak them ſtill to *ſtudy*, not to *have renounced*, the *Pomps and Vanities of this wicked world:* Would a modeſt Heathen go more lightly arrayed to their Shews and Games, than many people do, as they pretend, to the Worſhip of God and Chriſt? Theſe things I would not have taxed thus plainly were there hopes by any other way, either of redreſſing them, or not being (at leaſt through connivance,

nivance, and a kind of baſe ſilence) guilty and a partizan in them.

And if this be the ſtate of things at preſent, in too many, of our moſt ſolemn Aſſemblies for Divine Worſhip, which, conſiſting of more choice and cull'd people, muſt needs have ever in them ſome numbers, who are grave, ſerious, judiciouſly (and no doubt piouſly) intent, who therefore cannot but by this their demeanour conciliate ſomewhat of *Reverence* to the *publick Actions*, and keep up therein *a face* of Religion; What then may we expect to find in the Streets and places of common congreſs for the ordinary buſineſs of Life, for dealing, buying, ſelling, and ſuch like Treaties? What in our Houſes, at our Tables and Entertainments? What at Meetings deſigned meerly for Pleaſure and Jollity? Alas! here *not ſo much as a face of Religion* very often appears: But on the contrary, Good God! what Swearing, Damning, moſt diſ-

mal and newly invented Execrations, as if men were afraid they could not bring themſelves and others to Hell ſoon enough? Again, What Rioting, Exceſs of Drinking, what Chambering, Wantoneſs, glorying in Sin, making proviſion for it? What trepanning Innocents into Sin, reproaching Sanctity, ſcoffing at all Religion and Religious? Theſe things are too groſly obſervable amongſt ſome; Amongſt others, what ſly Falſneſs, what ſtudied Diſſimulation, Malice, Treachery, Slanders and (where Slanders will hardly ſtick) Calumnious cenſures and jealous ſuſpicions dropt? On moſt hands, God knows, here is ſo much *denying the Power of Godlineſs*, that to good eyes there is little viſible, which will well paſs for a *Form*.

I have thus now viewed, and not unjuſtly repreſented the *publick manners* (for much more might have been ſaid with truth) both in *ſacred* and *common tranſactions*: All being put

put together and weighed, and it being alſo conſidered, that without Reformation (whatſoever God at preſent does for us, or however we may for the future flatter our ſelves) nothing but *publick Ruin*, or an *overflowing Scourge*, can be the end of theſe things; I will profeſs, that I cannot think any reaſonable perſon will judge either my *Charge* or *Proof* to have been too ſevere.

§. 7. But I will withal deſire, that it may be remembred (what has now been, not ſeldom, ſuggeſted) that the Deſign of theſe Papers is not fruitleſly to accuſe and brand the Age, much leſs to gratifie a cenſorious or ill-natur'd humour, in inveighing at any thing unpleaſing to me therein, but only to ſtir us all up to *judge our ſelves, that we may not one day be judged* and condemned *of the Lord*; to awaken ſuch amongſt us who *have a name that they live, but behold they are dead:*

at leaſt to contribute,or caſt in,theſe poor Mites which were in my hand towards the *Healing* that *Drowſie Evil* our Nations labour under in the matter of Religion. And whereas in compliance with ſuch deſign there are but *two* things (that I can think of) remaining yet untouch'd, namely, *firſt*, to repreſent how little ſatisfactory a *Form of Godlineſs* ſhould be to any one, and *ſecondly*, to give ſome *Advice* for *Advancing* the *Power of Godlineſs*, the next Chapter ſhall treat touching *both*, for the further compleating the whole.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Endervours for Redreſs.

Sect. 1. *The Nature of a Form of Godlineſs conſidered is a ſufficient Diſſuaſive from reſting in it.* Sect. 2. *Particular Conſiderations urged to diſſuade it.* Sect. 3. *Directions for Aſſerting Godlineſs into its Power in private perſons.* Sect. 4. *Somewhat may be done as to the Publick.* Sect. 5. *The Concluſion of the whole.*

§. 1. FOr the *Diſſuading men* from reſting in,or ſatisfying themſelves with, a *Form of Godlineſs*, in matter of Religion, if men would but be brought to think, little more need to be ſaid, than has been: Some things ſufficiently expoſe themſelves: meerly to have viewed what a *Form of Godlineſs* is, a man would conceive to be a ſufficient *Diſſuaſive* from reſting in it: I

would deſire therefore the Reader to recollect (or to peruſe again and ſeriouſly conſider) what was diſcourſed in the beginning touching this Subject; that a *Form of Godlineſs* is made up only of ſome *empty Pretences* and *bold Claims*, of ſome ſuperficial vainglorious and *fallacious Practices*: Let him then think with himſelf whether he can force himſelf to love or like a perſon of ſuch a Character as there repreſented: Is it amiable, to be a pretending Smatterer in Religious Knowledge? To profeſs, I believe thoſe things to be my Felicity, which, I know, I never concern my ſelf for? To pride my ſelf in falſe Giſts? To *ſtrain at Gnats and ſwallow Camels*? To talk of and make a ſtir about the true Church, when really I am of none, and perhaps live like an Heathen, if not worſe? And ſo of the reſt. Certainly a man that can but get leave of himſelf to *think*, will ſoon loath this Character, and himſelf if deſerving

ſerving it. But the better to enſure ſucceſs, we will deſcend to ſome more particular and, if poſſible, more effectual conſiderations.

§. 2. And firſt, let it be conſidered, a *Form of Godlineſs* alters not a man one jot, as to his eſtate Godwards: It neither avails him to the *juſtification* of his perſon (that is, the Pardon of his Sins) nor to the *Sanctification* or changing of his Heart; *Behold the days come, ſaith the Lord, that I will puniſh all them, which are circumciſed, with the uncircumciſed:* and the reaſon is added, *for all the* (circumciſed) *Houſe of* Iſrael *is uncircumciſed in the Heart.* Jer. ix. 25, 26. And *theſe days* undoubtedly are all along the *Goſpel ſtate*, under which *Circumciſion availeth nothing nor uncircumciſion, but the new Creature* (Gal. vi. 15.) or *Faith working by Love* (*chap.* v. *verſ.* 6.) which is plainly the *Power of Godlineſs:* A *Form of Godlineſs* then removes not the *Guilt of Sin:* Neither doth it put,

or

or work, in the man any real *Sanctity* or ſpiritual Excellency: A man may be, in a manner, as vitious as the Devil, the World and his own Luſts can make him, and yet for all that have a *Form of Godlineſs:* They were ſo in the place whence we had the Term (2 *Tim.* iii. 2, *&c.*) *Lovers of themſelves, covetous, proud, Blaſphemers, Traitors, &c.* yet, *having a Form of Godlineſs.* Now me thinks this is a dreadful and wounding conſideration, when a man ſhall deſcend into himſelf and ſee, I have been thus and thus long a Profeſſor of the Chriſtian Religion, but I am as far from the Pardon of any one Sin through Chriſt, as I was the firſt day I knew or heard the Name of Chriſt; I am alſo ſtill a graceleſs wretch; I know my ſelf thus and thus wicked, and devoid of all Chriſtian Virtue, which yet I have a long time hypocritically and impudently pretended to: Can any man, who has one grain of

of the Belief of a God, or even of common Ingenuity, in him, content himſelf in ſuch an eſtate?

Secondly, As a *Form of Godlineſs* alters not a mans eſtate here, ſo neither will it operate to any *future Reward* to him: Let a man take never ſo much pains in the moſt excellent Practices, which can accompliſh a meer *Form of Godlineſs*, and, after all, he may ſit down and ſay with himſelf, *Verily I have my Reward:* I have all the Heaven I am to look for: Theſe were we know our Lords words (*Matt.* vi.) touching thoſe famous people we have heard ſo much above of. They gave *Alms*, they *prayed*, they *faſted* (all materially great good Works) and they took care the World ſhould know all theſe their Virtues, and that *they might appear unto men*; What now was their Reward? They did appear; men took notice of their Acts, and the ignorant generality perhaps believed

lieved the Actors to be pretious good men; Theſe perſons therefore had their end, and here was their Heaven. Now is this an Heaven any man would be content with, would be thus put off as to a future happineſs? ſurely we would not.

Thirdly, Whereas it is pretended, and indeed is a great Truth, that there are ſome caſes, wherein nothing can ſtand us in ſtead, or adminiſter any comfort to us; but *Religion*; I ſay, a *Form of Godlineſs*, in theſe caſes, will be ſo far from affording any comfort, that contrariwiſe the reflecting on it will prove the greateſt torment imaginable, and even the Beginning of Hell-pains: Theſe caſes we may conceive chiefly two; (1.) Any dreadful complication of outward calamities; as when Eſtate, Health, nay even Friends, and thoſe of our very own fleſh and blood, may fail us; as it was with poor *Job*, ſtript of all.

Now

Now what had he in that caſe to comfort him? Lord (Job. x. 7.) *Thou knoweſt that I am not wicked.* And (chap. xxiii. 10, 11.) *He hath tried me and I ſhall come forth as gold. My foot hath held his ſteps, his way have I not declined.* Again, Chap. xxvii. 6. *My righteouſneſs I hold faſt and will not let it go; my heart ſhall not reproach me as long as I live.* Here was Godlineſs indeed in Power, and this was his comfort and ſupport. *God knows,* ſaies he, *and my heart knows, I am no hypocrite,* or only outſide Saint. But will a *Form of Godlineſs,* ſhould a man fall into ſuch caſe, and have need of refuge thereto, yield him any ſuch ſupport or ſolace? No certainly; rather quite contrary: Let one, who has it, be ſuppoſed in ſuch caſe to reflect upon *it, himſelf,* and *ſtate:* His heart muſt needs tell him, I am all outſide; I have thus long profeſt Religion, but my buſineſs has been all along only to keep all

fair

fair before men; before God and my own heart I have been ſtill an Hypocrite: And now *my Wickedneſs has found me out,* and the vengeance of God arreſted me for the ſatisfaction of his abuſed Grace and Patience. A ſad reſult (God knows) of Religion.

But ſuppoſe our way ſhould be more ſmooth, and we, through the main courſe of our life, eſcape any ſuch diſaſterous ſtate; yet (2.) The Deathbed or dying hour will come, and both then and at Gods dreadful Tribunal, nothing can ſupport us, but the comforts ariſing from *pure Religion:* Theſe indeed may; as in the caſe of good *Hezekiah,* when he had received the meſſage of Death: *Remember now O Lord, I beſeech thee how, I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy ſight.* Iſai. xxxviii. 3. And of bleſſed St. *Paul: I am now ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure*

departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord the righteous Judge ſhall give me at that day. 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8. The *anſwer of a good conſcience before God,* and *the proſpect of* an inſtant *bleſſed ſtate* will *ſupport* a man when his *fleſh and ſtrength and life fail him:* But will the reflexion on a *Form of Godlineſs* then ſtand a man in this ſtead? God knows, clean contrary: The formal Chriſtians Conſcience will then tell him, Thou haſt been all thy days but at beſt a guilded Hypocrite, and now awaits thee nothing, but a *portion appointed amongſt Hypocrites, where ſhall be wailing and gnaſhing of teeth.* Matth. xxiv. laſt. Thou haſt perhaps cheated men, and endeavoured to cheat God, but thou haſt certainly and irremediably cheated thy ſelf, and now muſt go to that flaming Lake, where eternally

nally is to dwell *whoſoever loveth and maketh a lie:* for but one continued Lie indeed has all thy life and Religion been: Thus will the immortal Worm then begin to gnaw, and fill the breſt with fire, which ſhall never be quenched. Now let all men duely conſider this beforehand, and think if a Religion whoſe returns or reſults upon our refuge thereto for comfort, will be ſuch as theſe, ought to be ſatisfactory to them.

Laſtly, Let it be laid to heart, how diſhonourable and vile, a meer *Form of Godlineſs* is, in point of Religion, if conſidered under the character it juſtly admits. We read (2 Cor. xi. 14.) *Satan himſelf is transformed into an Angel of light:* whence I may reaſonably argue, Can Satan himſelf, if he were to appear and converſe amongſt men, *transform himſelf into an Angel of light*, that is, appear as pure as a bleſſed holy Angel? then certainly could he out-

do

do, in a Form of Godlineſs, the exacteſt Practiſt ever engaged therein: Now would a perſon that calls himſelf a Chriſtian, content himſelf with ſuch a Religion, as good an one as which, or perhaps much a better (as far as the Devil is more expert in the Arts of Hypocriſie) Satan himſelf could have at pleaſure, if he were to be incarnate? In the name of God then, let each mans Soul abhor to reſt in, or ſatisfie himſelf with, a meer Form of Godlineſs, inaſmuch as the moſt accompliſht kind is no better.

§. 3. We will now ſuppoſe all, whoſe Conſciences tell them they are guilty herein, really to dread, either being found at laſt, or at preſent continuing, ſuch. It therefore now only remains to conſider, How *Godlineſs* may be aſſerted into its *Power* over our *Lives* and *Hearts*, or What *Directions* may be given to this purpoſe.

And the Method or ſeveral Gradations, by which Godlineſs obtains ſuch power, having been above ſo largely and plainly ſtated, whoſoever will reflect thereon and proceed thereby, cannot be much to ſeek in this behalf. Yet leſt any ſhould think that diſcourſe to contain only too general matter of Direction, and not ſuiting or anſwering ſufficiently their ſpiritual needs, I ſhall, with regard to each of thoſe ſeveral ſteps, in which we above inſiſted, ſet down ſuch particular *Adviſes*, as I hope may reach the caſe of the meaneſt of thoſe who are really deſirous *Godlineſs* may have its *power* over them.

It was ſaid then, The *Firſt* ſtep to *the Power of Godlineſs*, is a *Due underſtanding of the Doctrines of Chriſtian Faith, and Laws of Chriſtian life*: ſuch *underſtanding* therefore muſt be endeavoured by the meeteſt *means*: God, we know, has for this purpoſe appointed the *Miniſtry*

niſtry of his Word: to this therefore we muſt conſtantly and conſcientiouſly attend, and that with teachable and humble hearts, *As new born babes deſiring the ſincere milk thereof that we may grow thereby.* 1 Pet. ii. 2. Beſides this, ſome particular perſons may haply have other *private advantages*, namely, pious and intelligent *Friends*, good *Books*, and what elſe is of like nature; all which (ſo as not to withdraw from, or undervalue, the publick miniſtration of the Word (the primary means by God appointed) we are, according as we have them) diligently to make uſe of, till we have furniſht our ſelves with a competent ſtock of *Chriſtian knowledge*. Only it is to be remembred here, *endleſs reading* and *voluminous ſtudy* in this caſe is not neceſſary: There is a wide difference betwixt ſtudying *Chriſtianity* and ſtudying *Divinity*: betwixt treaſuring up knowledge enough to ſave my own Soul,

and beſides that, furniſhing my ſelf with ſuch a meaſure, as may ſuffice both further to adorn mine own, and conduct many others: They, who are concerned to be only ſincere and honeſt Chriſtians, will do well to content themſelves with the certain, plain, and undoubted points of Chriſtianity, conteined in our Creed and the other common grounds of *Catechetical Doctrine*, which are neither exceeding numerous, nor (as they are, and ought to be commonly explained) very difficult; being both deſigned and fitted by God for plain men, and at firſt preached by ſuch. We know whoſe Character it is to be *Ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.* 2 Tim. iii. 7. And we may obſerve, when perſons of ordinary education and condition graſp at more than an uſual and plain ſtock of knowledg, they are oftner confounded and amuſed into whimſies than built up

unto

unto Holineſs and Salvation. The clearing therefore to themſelves true and plain notions of the Doctrine of *Chriſtian Faith* and *manners*, by ſuch means as theſe mentioned, muſt be their *firſt endeavour* who would ſet up *the Power of Godlineſs* in their Souls.

Secondly, (Proportionably to what has been above laid down) Their next care muſt be, to root in themſelves a deep and cordial *perſwaſion* of the *truth* of the *Chriſtian Faith* (eſpecially in ſuch main points firſt, as thoſe before, under this head, inſtanced in) and ſo of the moſt *indiſpenſable obligation* of its *Precepts*. This, as it is the moſt difficult, ſo moſt neceſſary part of the whole work; and therefore requires our greateſt Labour, Thought, and Aſſiduity: And for the effecting hereof, as in the other following points, ſo in this, there will be ſome Directions *Peculiar*, others *Common* to this with the reſt enſuing: The Com-

mon ones will come moſt fitly, in the cloſe of the Directory part: As to what is more peculiar then here. (1.) We muſt endeavour to *treaſure up in our Memory* (or, if we are able, for help of our memory, in writing) *the weightieſt* and moſt preſſing *arguments* we meet with in our courſe of Attending the Miniſtry of the Word, or which we can find out by reading or other enquiry, touching the *Exiſtence* (or real Being) *of God*, of the *Unſeen World*, and of the *Life to come*: of which points, if the heart be once truly perſwaded, all other grand Neceſſaries will eaſily follow. To come as cloſely home as may be: Let me conſider with my ſelf, Have I at any time heard any thing urged, to prove *God* is *a moſt real Being*, *Religion a moſt ſerious matter*, the *World to come* of the *greateſt importance* any thing poſſible can be of, &c. Have I, I ſay, at any time heard any thing urged to prove theſe or the like points

points, which has made any impreſſion on my mind? If I have, let me recollect that, and ſeriouſly reflect upon it, and in the end treaſure it up in my memory, as a moſt pretious Jewel: If I have not, let me enquire by all means I can, and not reſt till I have found ſome ſuch *Evidences* as may fix the belief of theſe principles in my Soul: I ſhall, upon enquiry, find ſome proofs hereof there are *Within me*, which I ever carry about with me, and cannot be rid of; Others *Without me*. *Within*; The Dictates and ſenſe of my own Mind and Conſcience, whenſoever I am ſerious, and intently thinking on theſe things, importunately inculcates to me they are truths: I find I cannot but fear a God, or unſeen Power, and be apprehenſive of a Future Eſtate: I cannot judge that I came into this World to be afer Death equal to an Hog, or to the *Beaſt that periſheth:* Whether I will or no, my mind

does upbraid me with ſome actions of mine and call them vile to my face, others it commends and is pleaſed with reflexions upon: A difference it does put betwixt Good and Evil: Theſe and other atteſtations to Religion I may meet with from my own breſt. *From without*; This glorious Fabrick of Heaven and Earth (which muſt as ſurely have a Maker, as the Houſe I dwell in had a Builder) The courſe of Nature (and Providence) which I cannot force my ſelf to believe goes all by chance. (For I ſee much meaner things, none of which go ſo) with diverſe other points but moderately attended to and conſidered, will lead me to acknowledge the *Eternal Power and Godhead.* I muſt not here digreſs upon this copious ſubject; Only one thing I may not omit: A *particular recollection* and obſervation of *Gods Providences* to our ſelves *in perſon*; through the whole courſe of our lives, how we have

have been *endangered*, and how *reſcued* and *preſerved*, how all along *ſuſtained*, how ſometimes *our ſin hath found us out*, at other times how *our Prayers have been anſwered*, and our *Obedience been owned* and rewarded; the particular reflexion, I ſay, on theſe, and other like points, is a cogent and very moving Proof (*ad hominem* at leaſt) to imprint in us the belief of the Being of a God, and that he does govern and will judg the World: *Whoſo is wiſe and will obſerve theſe things, even they ſhall underſtand the loving kindneſs of the Lord.* Pſal. cxi. 43. I may confidently avow, that, as there is no man who lives in the fear of God, but is much in the obſervation and mindful recollection of Gods dealings with him, ſo it can hardly come to paſs, that any man can ſtudy his own outward condition, courſe or fortunes (as we ſpeak) from his Cradle to his mature age) but he ſhall find thereby, ſtrongly,

raiſed

raiſed in his Soul, a ſenſe and perſwaſion of the *Being, Power, Goodneſs, Wiſdom, Juſtice* and *Holineſs* of *God*: I might not therefore forbear to touch upon this point.

(2.) Such proofs being thus *treaſured up*, let them be frequently *meditated upon*, at leaſt, as often as may be, called to mind; and eſpecially ſuch of them, which have at any time more conſiderably affected us: On ſuch let our Thoughts more durably dwell; let us improve the impreſſion and do what we can by frequent and intent thought to ſettle it indeleble, or ordinarily recurrent, (ever running) in our mind.

(3.) For the better eſtabliſhing in our Souls an hearty belief of the *principles of Godlineſs*, it will be very neceſſary, that we forthwith abandon, and in our practice eſchew, whatſoever we know or ſo much as reaſonably ſuſpect, to be ſinful. For the allowing our ſelves in any ſuch things makes it ſeem our intereſt

tereſt that Religion ſhould be falſe; and then, as if in our own defenſe, we ſhall be inclined to believe ſo, or, which is much the ſame, wiſh it were.

Laſtly, Where ſuch perſwading the heart of the principles of Godlineſs is deſigned, *No Doubt*, at any time ariſing in the heart, *muſt be endured* any longer, than till the firſt opportunity we can find of ſatisfaction: And if we cannot by *Thought*, *Reading*, *Prayer*, or *ordinary Converſe*, ſatisfie our ſelves, let us ſpeedily repair to ſuch *Spiritual Guides*, as may ſuccour us: The neglect of hereof, in other caſes as well as this, within our *Church*, is a very great fault, and much prejudices the *Power of Godlineſs* amongſt us. Other more common *Directions*, uſeful indeed in this point, yet no leſs ſo in thoſe others following, will be ſuggeſted in their place. And thus far briefly, as to that moſt important concern towards *Godlineſs*, of the eſtabliſhing the *Belief of its Principles* in the heart.

It

It was ſaid above, in the third place, *That* both *ſuch Knowledge and ſuch Perſuaſion*, as deſcribed, *might be frequently of little Power to Godlineſs or an holy Practice, unleſs the Mind, in the particulars of life, be kept attentive to both:* Correſpondently then herewith, all *means*, which in Chriſtian prudence we can find out, muſt be *uſed* to *keep alive in the Mind a ſenſe of theſe Principles*, or (which is the ſame in other words) to keep *Conſcience*, in the particular conduct of our actions, *attent to them.* And I can think of nothing more proper hereto, than the frequent awakening in our Souls the thoughts of them. (1.) By a *conſtant Obſervation* of the *due returns* of our more *ſolemn Devotions:* Omit none of the ſtated *times of Prayer*, nor any of the main *parts* of which thy Devotions ought to conſiſt: Particularly, I do and muſt ſuppoſe, that our daily ſolemn Devotions, as one main (integrant)

part

part of them, do contain an *Examination of Conſcience* touching our *late paſt actions*, and touching the very *preſent ſtate* and temper of *our mind:* This I would have, in its ſeaſon, on no accounts whatſoever, omitted by him who would keep or have his Heart under *the Power of Godlineſs:* And moſt eſpecially, let care be taken, *the Heart* ſtill be *engaged in Prayer:* We ſhould never content our ſelves with the offering up *verbal ſupplications:* Though indeed our Prayers cannot, when ſolemn, be ordinarily without words, yet they muſt never conſiſt of them alone: And the engaging the Heart in Prayer will ſtamp ſuch a conſiderative ſtate upon it, as will be ſure to laſt ſome time after. (2.) By *frequent Elapſes* of the Soul towards God in an *ejaculatory way.* This kind of Prayer a man may be at, without others obſervation or interruption to himſelf, in the midſt of Buſineſs, or in the midſt of Company.

pany; And it is of ſingular uſe to keep alive a ſenſe of God and our Duty in the Heart: and that both by *Impetrating* or deriving upon us the Aſſiſtances of his Grace, and even by *diſpoſing* or ſometimes determining our minds to that which ſhould be their conſtant bent.

I will only add hereto, that they, who will be godly in good earneſt, muſt exerciſe themſelves to *ſet a bound* to their *deſires of this world*: They muſt learn to know when they have enough; and finding themſelves ſufficiently provided for their own and theirs paſſing honeſtly and decently through this world, they ought to look upon it as every way their Intereſt to put an end to their ſolicitude of getting or amaſſing up more Wealth: Our *Baptiſmal Vow*, one ſhould think, ought to be reputed obligatory to us all, for ſo much renouncing the world as this comes to: And the primitive Chriſtians,

ſtians, we cannot but be ſenſible, did much more; *They left all*, they gave over not only *getting* but *poſſeſſing*. Now the plain & immediate conſequent hereof would be, that a vaſt part of our worldly buſineſs would ceaſe, our minds would be diſcharged of a great deal of that care and thoughtfulneſs about *many things*, which night and day both puts and keeps Heaven, our Duty and the concernments of our Souls far from us: We ſhould be vacant to a ſerious godly temper, and to conſider before we act; in a word, we ſhould be at leiſure to be conſcientiouſly holy. And they who will not be perſuaded hereto, let them conſider, how they will acquit themſelves of that Guilt our Lord has warn'd us of, in *choaking the good Seed with Cares and Riches and the Pleaſures of this life* (Luk. viii. 14.) together with the *luſts of other things* as St. *Mark* adds? (*Mark* iv. 19.) 'Tis certain, we *cannot ſerve*

two Maſters, God and *Mammon*; and it were well if ſome men did not go about to divide themſelves betwixt more: but ſuch mens Religion is in vain: Indeed men never can be religious, as long as daily and hourly, they are intent on this world: Such groveling temper debauches Conſcience, expectorates or baniſhes out of the mind all due attention and conſideration of religious Principles.

Laſtly, in compliance with what was ſaid above touching *Endeavors to habituate* our ſelves to *conſtant conformity* to the Chriſtian Law, *all care* muſt be uſed to *quicken* our ſelves to *ſuch Endeavors*. To this purpoſe it will be very uſeful to be much and frequent in ſuch Thoughts as theſe.

1. That, in Gods account, inconſtant or *partial Obedience* is *no Obedience*. *Whoſoever ſhall keep the whole Law, and yet offend* (allowing himſelf) *in one point, is guilty of all.*

For

For he who ſaid, *Do not commit Adultery*, ſaid alſo, *Do not kill.* Jam. ii. 10, 11. In whatſoever we knowingly neglect or violate our Duty, we caſt off the Fear of God, and break all that is ſacred in our obligations to him: Therefore he never eſteems he has our Hearts, except he have them wholly: and though he does gratiouſly overlook our Infirmities and Slips, yet when at any critical ſeaſons or in any particular inſtances we indulge our ſelves in departing from Him and our Duty, this is ſo direct a preferring (for that time) others before him, at leaſt ſo mature a bringing, in to our Hearts and Services competitors with him, that he will never endure it. *If any man draw back, my Soul ſhall have no pleaſure in him,* (Hebr. x. 38.) is the Sentence in caſe the of habitual and perſiſting Partiality. Let it be further conſidered,

2. That all *former ſtudy* and pains to gain *Knowledge*, to bring the

Heart to *Belief* and *Attention*, is but *loſt labour*; nay theſe very accompliſhments themſelves, ſuppoſe they were attain'd, are but frivolous, without this conſtant and uniform endeavor of Obedience. 'Tis this alone which can break off the old courſe and cuſtom of ſin, diſengage us of ours Chains, make Holineſs both eaſie and pleaſant, adminiſter matter of Comfort to us in our reflections on our ſelves, and in a word, avail us when we come upon our great account at Gods Tribunal. The beſt undoubtedly have had many falls, but if a mans Conſcience can ſay, *I have honeſtly endeavoured* in all I knew, *to walk uprightly before God*, though in many things I have failed, this *anſwer of a good Conſcience*, through all the particulars ſuggeſted, here and hereafter, will, through the Bloud of Chriſt, eaſe and ſupport me, and nothing without this will.

3. Nay

3. Nay the former accompliſhments of Knowledge, Belief, Attention to our Duty, will, without this, not only be unavailable to our Benefit, but moſt *dreadfully operate* to *our greater Guilt and Wo*, they will render our Sins out of meaſure ſinful: For what can more inhance or heighten mens Crimes, than that notwithſtanding their Knowledge, Belief and actual thought both of their Chriſtian Duty and Obligations, they have ordinarily allowed themſelves in unchriſtian practices? For Sinners of ſuch a rate as this, if for any, is reſerved certainly the *Blackneſs of Darkneſs*, and *Judgment without Mercy*.

But it is to be hoped, theſe and other like conſiderations, if much in our minds, may quicken us to an impartial *endeavour*, of conforming all our Actions to the Chriſtian Law: And ſuch endeavour, maintained and perſiſted in, will no doubt through Divine Grace ſucced

and take effect: Frequent acts of all Chriſtian Virtues will be exerted, many good Works done, the Habit of a new Life attained, and Holineſs become natural to us: That bleſſed temper alſo of habitual Seriouſneſs, Tenderneſs, and Heavenlineſs, will ſoon follow in courſe, and ſo *Godlineſs* will both *obtain* and *hold* its *due Power*.

Eſpecially, if to the Practice of theſe more particular Directions we add a *conſtant, devout* and *wiſe Uſe* of thoſe *general means* which God hath appointed, as well for the implanting as growth of Grace in our Hearts. Thoſe means are well known to be *Prayer*, the *Miniſtry of the Word*, and *Sacraments*, to which we muſt join *Meditation:* All theſe, I ſaid, we muſt uſe (1.) *Conſtantly*, that is without omiſſion or neglect of them in their due ſeaſon. (2.) *Devoutly*, always endeavouring to come to them with due temper, and then engaging our Hearts in them.

them. And (3.) *Wiſely*, remembering our Chriſtian wants and applying theſe as the outward means which God has put in our power, and whereby he has commanded us to addreſs our ſelves to him for all Grace and Aids we can want. But it may not be amiſs to touch in a word or two upon each particularly.

Firſt, As to *Prayer*, both publick and private: As we would either bring or keep our Hearts under the *Power of Godlineſs*, let none of the ſtated opportunities of it be neglected: And when we come thereto, let us before we open our Mouths, ſet God before the Eyes of our Soul, as then more eſpecially preſent, and take care we ſeek to him *with our Souls and all that is within us:* Now to the end we may manage this ſpiritual help and office wiſely, let us (becauſe we apply it at preſent as a way or means to *the Power of Godlineſs*)

let us, I ſay, remember in what of the particulars, ſo often mentioned, we are deficient, or whether not in all: Do we want *Knowledge* of what we are to believe or do, in order to Salvation? Let us earneſtly ſupplicate to God, that he will inlighten our minds, ſtrengthen our powers, aſſiſt and bleſs our endeavours after the *Knowledg of the Holy. He giveth Wiſdom liberally to all who ask, and upbraideth none*, Jam. I. 5. Do we know enough, but find it difficult to *believe? Faith is the Gift of God:* Let us beſeech him, he will both furniſh us with more preſſing Evidences of his Truth (than haply are yet to come to our knowledge) and more deeply affect our Hearts with thoſe we have, that being truly perſuaded in our whole Chriſtianity, our Faith may never fail. Do we want *attentive and heedful Minds?* Let us beg of him, that he will both ſet and keep his Law ever before us, and

and write it in the Tables of our Hearts. Do we want *Diligence, Reſolution* and Chriſtian *Srength* for endeavouring to do what we ſee and believe we are obliged to? Let us beſeech our heavenly Father to quicken us, by the Fear and Love of himſelf, and to enable us by his Power from above, that we may walk before him with a perfect Heart, having reſpect unto all his Commandments. Finally, do we want the *Chriſtian temper* above deſcribed? Seeing it is God, who turneth as he pleaſes, and faſhioneth the Heart of man within him, let us never forget daily to importune him that he would both *create and eſtabliſh in us a right Spirit*, even ſuch which may be according to his own Heart. Thus uſed, we ſhall certainly find *Prayer* a moſt admirable and effectual *means* to the ſetting up and maintaining *the Power of Godlineſs* in our Souls.

2. Of the *Miniſtry of the Word*, I

have already ſpoken, in part, and as it is a means of Knowledge and Faith particularly. The *conſtant*, *devout*, and *diſcreet* attendance thereon will alſo certainly mightily operate to a *conſiderative* heedful *ſtate of mind*, to honeſt reſolutions and *Endeavours of Integrity* or walking in all good Conſcience before God, and in a word, to the *due Chriſtian temper*. Hereof the CXIX. Pſalm is, in a manner throughout, an ample proof. And,

3. No leſs muſt I ſay of the *Sacraments*. *Reflecting* upon our own *Baptiſmal Vow*, when we are preſent at the Baptiſm of others, and *frequent renewing* it at the *Lords Table*, as it leads us to a more ſtrict, ſolemn and mature examination of our ſelves, ſo certainly above all other means ſtrengthens the *Intereſt of Godlineſs* in our Hearts: I may confidently ſay, one great reaſon of the Chriſtian multitudes not living in better Conſcience towards God,

God, is their having been accuſtomed to ſo much neglect of the *Lords Supper:* The Bloud of Chriſt would both warm and aw mens Hearts.

4. But we cannot always *pray, hear* or *communicate*; *think* or *meditate* we may oftener: And this ought to go in conjunction generally with all thoſe other Duties: A man never prays as he ſhould, except he ſpend ſome thoughts beforehand in examining his Conſcience: the ſame may I ſay much more of receiving the *Lords Supper*; this undoubtedly requires more thoughts foregoing: And very little will be our Benefit by *hearing* except afterwards we recollect and by ſome *Meditation* endeavour to fix upon our Spirits what we have heard moſt touching our own condition: I may not ſtand here to diſcourſe, that *Meditation* is either *occaſional* or *ſolemn:* Both of them certainly in their ſeaſon ought to exerciſe every Chriſtian as he is able to employ himſelf

himſelf therein: But occaſional and tranſient thought as we may be oftner at (walking, travelling, buſied about outward affairs in the world) ſo it will concern us more frequently to apply as a means to quicken the Power of Godlineſs in our Hearts. We know who makes it a part of the godly mans Character (as it is indeed his great preſervative againſt both the *Counſels of the ungodly* and *the Way of ſinners*) that *he meditates in the Law of the Lord day and night:* It was accordingly very much *Davids* own practice, as we may obſerve through the whole Book of *Pſalms*; many of which were certainly compoſed (in part or in whole) by him upon his Bed by night, as well as others by day: And it were very well if more of the waking part of our repoſe were ſpent in *communing with our own Hearts* and God *upon our Bed:* Then generally, we are or may be *ſtill* and free from outward diſturban-

diſturbances: But as men that are *wiſe in this Generation*, employ and catch all ſeaſons of getting, ſo ſhould thoſe who are or would be *Children of Light*, all opportunities for holy thought, as being ſingularly ſerviceable to the Power of Godlineſs. And thus as to the *private Directory part*, both *particular* and *general*.

§. 4. Something may be done as to the *Publick* (and for propagating the Power of Godlineſs in others, by *Magiſtrates*, *Miniſters*, *Parents*, or Heads of Families. Firſt, *All* theſe ſorts of men might happily *join* in promoting the *due Obſervation of the Lords day*: *Magiſtrates* in awing and driving Idlers, or ſuch whoſe Devotion leads them not, to Church, Morning and Evening; *Miniſters*, in being diligent and zealous in the diſcharge of their Duty, diſcreetly ſuiting both their Sermons and Catechiſings to this end of affecting mens Hearts with the Power of Godlineſs,

Godlineſs, and as they ſee fit, complying with ſuch methods as thoſe above propounded thereto; *Parents* and *Maſters of Families*, in being aiding and aſſiſtant to the Magiſtrate and Miniſter, in ſeeing their Children and Servants duely and orderly frequent the Church, come, as required, to Catechiſm or the Sacrament; or, in caſe they do not, firſt warning, reproving and, as need requires, threatning them, but where this is in vain, calling in the Magiſtrates help to puniſh ſuch Offenders. If this courſe do not ſuit all places, by reaſon of the thinneſs of Magiſtrates in leſſer Pariſhes, the Miniſters and Churchwardens conſcientious diſcharge of their Duty in giving warning to the negligent, that if they reform not, they muſt preſent them to the *Ordinary*, (which would ſuddenly redreſs (what ſome ſo much complain of) the want of Diſcipline in our Church,) and in caſe they do not reform, actually preſenting

preſenting them, would undoubtedly much contribute to the remedying the publick evils we tax: For by theſe means all ſorts of perſons would be brought to the publick means of Grace, *Knowledg would be encreaſed* and thereby the *Power of Godlineſs* would inſinuate it ſelf into the Hearts of a multitude who live now as without God in the world. Thus as to what theſe Orders of men may do *jointly*.

Severally alſo, no little advance, in this deſign, may each of theſe in their places make. I will ſuppoſe I need not tell the Miniſters what they may do, as well by a diſcreet and conſcientious diligence in their Duty generally, as eſpecially (1.) By conſcientious *Catechiſing* the young, openly in the Church (as required by Law) and ſo in the hearing of the aged. (Under the name of Catechiſing I comprehend the practical explaining and applying to the capacities of the meaneſt, the Principles

ciples of Chriſtian Religion, out of, and according to. the Catechiſm.) (2.) By *private Viſits and Admonitions.* (3.) In taking care, all of *their own Family* be reſpectively *examples* to others.

And as to *Parents and Maſters of Families.* (1.) The ſetting up and maintaining the daily *Worſhip of God in the Family,* as it would otherwiſe derive a Bleſſing upon the Family, ſo it would certainly by degrees imprint a Reverence and Senſe of Religion on the minds, even of the youngeſt, as they grow up. (2.) The taking care not only that all who are young, but all who are ignorant, learn their *Catechiſm,* the keeping them ſome part of the Lords day and great Feſtivals (out of Church-time) in reading the Bible or other good Books, or elſe in attending to ſuch as can read, and, if poſſible, the taking account of their Behaviour, Attention or Proficiency at Church, would be more beneficial in this behalf

half than eaſily imaginable. A very deplorable thing it is that a Family ſhould have nothing of religious Offices amongſt them, but only what they have in common with the reſt of the Pariſh, one hour or two in a week, at Church: yet God knows how many thouſand Families there are amongſt us that have not; and this no doubt is one reaſon why *the Power of Godlineſs* thrives no better. I have thus briefly and familiarly ſet down what I think fit to ſay here, as to thoſe *obvious methods* by wch the Power of Godlineſs may be promoted *publickly* or amongſt the multitude.

§ 5. But *publick or Eccleſiaſtico-political methods* were not the deſign of theſe Papers, which, as is plain by their Contents, were calculated for mens private ſelves, to be an help whereby each man might be able to ſee whether he has any thing of real Religion in himſelf, and if he have not, how he might arrive thereat. And this certainly is one of the moſt

moſt likely and incomparably the beſt way to the Reformation of the Chriſtian world, that each ſhould amend one, namely himſelf. For when many particular perſons have done that (all virtue being diffuſive, and Religion, which is the greateſt, moſt ſo) their own Hearts will naturally prompt them by all ſober means to inſtill into all within their ſphere that ſpiritual ſenſe and life they feel in themſelves: There will be leſs Pragmaticalneſs, Pride, Oſtentation, Calumny and ill Nature in the world; more of real Serioufneſs, Peaceableneſs, Humility, Charity and conſcientious exerciſing our ſelves to good works: that is to ſay, the true Power of Godlineſs will more prevail. And the Good God make this plain hearty Diſcourſe in ſome meaſure effectual to to the bleſſed end it pretends, and was cordially by its Author deſign'd for!

A M E N.

Some ADVICE to ſuch as own *the Power of Godlineſs*, ſubjoyned to the foregoing *Diſcourſe*, about—

§ 1. *Spiritual Wickedneſſes.* § 2. *Oſtentation.* § 3. (*Tet*) *Keeping a Decorum.* § 4. *Murmuring.* § 5. *Fears and Jealouſies.* § 6. *Buſie-bodies.* § 7. *Giving Offence.* § 8. *Uncharitable Opinionativeneſs.* § 9. *Charitable catholick Comprehenſion.*

HAving look'd over the foregoing Papers, though I find many defects therein (which my deſign of Brevity permitted not to ſupply); yet there is *one* of ſuch importance, that I judged I could not diſcharge that Faith which I ow to the Age, if I ſhould wholly let it paſs; or be ſilent in a caſe, in which I have here ſo fair an occaſion to ſpeak, and in which it is ſo needful ſomebody ſhould ſpeak: The caſe is this; There are great

numbers amongſt us who pretend or own themſelves (and undoubtedly many of them are) acted, for the main, by the *Power of Godlineſs*; who yet by divers imprudent and inconſiſtent Practices, to ſay no worſe, much diſgrace it; to whom therefore it is high time (as the world goes) that ſome very particular *Advices* and *Admonitions* (*ad homines*) ſhould be given; which Office, though I am ſenſible my ſelf to be very inſufficient for, yet having taken upon me to ſpeak ſo roundly hitherto, I will deſire the following Supplement may be taken as proceeding from the ſame well-meaning with the reſt of theſe Papers.

§ Firſt, then, I earneſtly conjure all who pretend to the *Power of Godlineſs*, to be with all good Conſcience, as before God, careful that while they profeſs, and live in, an abhorrence of more groſs and *ſcandalous* ſins, they do not allow themſelves

ſelves in *ſpiritual* Wickedneſſes. *Groſs and ſcandalous Sins* I call *Profaneneſs, Perjurys, Treaſons, Oppreſſions, Diſhoneſty* or *Injuſtice, Uncleanneſs, Drunkenneſs* and the like: *Spiritual Wickedneſſes* I reckon *ſecret Pride, Cenſoriouſneſs, Peeviſhneſs, Revengefulneſs, habitual Diſcontent, Partiality, Diſſemblings, Falſeneſs*, and ſuch other too frequent evils: Divers of this later ſort, men, otherwiſe very ſtrict in their Lives, are apt to overlook, and it is well if they do not allow, at leaſt tolerate and judge tolerable in themſelves. But let all ſeriouſly conſider, the God, with whom we have to do, is *The Searcher of Hearts*, and requireth *Truth in the inward parts*: He will no more endure a conceited, puff'd up, waſpiſh and uncharitable Soul, than he does approve the Practices of the moſt profligate and debauched wretch. It is the Preeminence of *Chriſtianity*, above all other Religions and Diſciplines, to purge the

Heart, to induce a ſweet, eaſie and humble Temper: ſuch Spirit is amiable before God and man; ſuch we are ſtrictly obliged to, as we would be bleſſed or like our Maſter; and, ſuppoſing we profeſs the Chriſtian Faith (as we do) we ſhame the *Goſpel of Chriſt*, and expoſe the *Power of Godlineſs*, if we wear not ſuch.

§ 2. Let all (eſpecially thoſe of the Character I ſpeak to) beware of *Oſtentation* or any thing that ſavors of *Vain glory*. Let them ſpeak or do nothing with deſign, or any appearance of deſign, to be ſeen of men, or to get themſelves the repute and notice of the world, as being more godly than their Chriſtian Brethren: If a generally-holy, harmleſs and devout Life gain them ſuch repute, if the ſhadow, of its own accord, follow Virtue, ſo be it; let them go on as not regarding it, or looking back thereon: Surely, let 'em not by a commonly-affected vein

of

of Diſcourſe, by any ſtrained Carriage, Deportment, Look, Garb, or other like Singularity, give the world occaſion to think, they deſire to be cryed up for the *Godly men of the Age*: ſuch Behaviour is very nauſeous to all ſober obſervers, and is too often expoſed and ridicul'd by perſons of a vain (or, as they would rather have it called) of a more free, facetious and ingenious Converſation. The world is apt to cenſure all pretences to more Zeal and Sanctity, than ordinary, of Hypocriſie or Self-conceit: and though they may ſin in ſo doing, yet we ought, as far as we are able, to avoid *putting a ſtumbling block* before them, I mean giving them any occaſion of imploying their uncharitable Faculty of judging. Beſides, it is a great *felicity* to *approve* a mans ſelf to God *in ſecret*, to be able to reflect on many *hidden treaſures of good works*: Their unobſervedneſs inhances the Joy they

adminiſter: And we know who tells us, that that Generation, who *ſought Honour of Men, and not of God only*, even in thoſe things wherein they ſeemed to have done well, *loſt their Reward.*

§ 3. Yet let us notwithſtanding remember theſe Precepts of the Apoſtles, *Provide things honeſt in the ſight of all men*, Romans xii. 17. ΠΡΟΝΟΟΥΜΕΝΟΙ, Forecaſting all may be handſome: And again, *Whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are honeſt* (or venerable) *whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of good report, if there be any Virtue, if there be any Praiſe, think on theſe things*, Phil. iv. 8. Though we muſt avoid whatever looks like Affectation, Vain glory or Hypocriſie, yet we muſt be careful to maintain ſuch a *Decorum*, to expreſs in our Diſcourſe & Actions, ſuch *Gravity, Prudence*, and *ſenſe of Religion*, accompanied with a *ſweetneſs* of *Courteſie and*

and Affability, that we may give good examples, win others to the love of our perſons, and ſo of holy Practice; and our very *Converſation* may be a kind of *check* or *aw* upon the *vain Spirits* of ſome, yet together *obliging* unto all. The world is ſo prejudiced againſt all Auſterities of Religion, and yet ſo apt to find or make faults in the Lives of all religious men, rejoycing and inſulting if they can catch perſons of ſuch note, peccant or misbehaving in any thing, encouraging themſelves in their own Vices, as thinking good mens ſlips authoriſe their crimes; that there is need of all poſſible care, ſo to menage our ſelves in our converſe *between Severity* and *Complacence*, that the *Goſpel of Chriſt be not through us evil ſpoken of*: If we are reſerved, we are cryed out of, as proud, moroſe or hypocritical: if open and frank, that ſhall be interpreted Looſneſs in us, which in

others would be eſteemed but innocent Fredom; that Sin groſs and ſcandalous here, which elſewhere paſſes for trivial, or is ſcarce obſerv'd. I confeſs the caſe is difficult, and will ſometimes try the skill of men of moſt Temper and Conduct; But it is ſure there is nothing but our habitual well-doing *can put to ſilence the Ignorance of fooliſh and wicked men*, if yet this will effect it. The conſideration therefore hereof ſhould excite all ſerious perſons, to a diligent watch over their ſeveral (more formed) thoughts, words and actions; there being on all hands ſo many that *watch for their halting*, and the Devil and his Agents ſtill making ſuch advantages thereof.

§ 4. As a thing generally of ill report, let any godly men, who are guilty, lay aſide that *uneaſie, querelous*, and too often *murmuring humour*, which is gone abroad in theſe Nations, and for which a ſort of men, whom

whom I could name, are grown notorious: Various are the Subjects people find to complain of; ſometimes of their own *Sufferings*; ſometimes of others of their Friends, *&c.* I will not here ſpeak how ſome men magnifie both, without conſidering that themſelves are the Authors of them, or might, with good Conſcience, by a little more Prudence and Temper, than they have exerciſed, eaſily have prevented them. (I pray God make us all one, or all eaſie to one another). That which I ſhall rather tax and diſſuade, is, thoſe other common Themes, which many uſe to declaim upon, the *Manners of the Age*, *Want of good Government*, and of the *Execution of ſome wholſome Laws*, &c. It is indeed a great truth, the Age is very corrupt, and too many Magiſtrates negligent; but does our unquiet diſcourſe hereof amend things? Is *ſpeaking evil of Dignities* a Chriſtian method of Refor-

Reformation? Does it not much more concern and become us to amend what is amiſs in ourſelves; and, where we are fit Reprovers, to reprove what we ſee deſerves it in others; where we are not, ſilently to reprove it by our own better and univerſal-holy Life, ſecretly, beſides mourning over all before God? Does not, I ſay, this Practice much more become the *Power of Godlineſs*, than filling all things with our fruitleſs outcries of the publick Sins? Surely it is a *guilty commutation*, inſtead of *mourning*, to *murmur*: nor can we find a more contemptible, pitiful way of expreſſing our Zeal, than ſtill to be finding ſomething to exclaim againſt. This generally is not the effect of Holineſs, but of Weakneſs; and ſome men will tell us, if we perſiſt herein, that we are only a *ſilly* ſort of *people, who know not what we would have, yet are ever diſſatisfied, that we have not our own Will.*

5. Much

§ 5. Much akin hereto is another Quality, very frequent amongſt ſuch men as I am now addreſſing to (and indeed very uneaſie to others as well as themſelves) that though they are under no ſuch preſent preſſure, as may juſtly provoke them to complain, yet they are ever *ſurmiſing* and *preſaging*, both to themſelves and the publick, moſt dreadful dangers, as now iminent and at hand. *Fears* and *Jealouſies* have gone fair, now a long time, to have ruined this Nation and extinguiſh'd our Church: only God hath hitherto ſtill miraculouſly retrieved both: But when we have ſo long found, by ſad experience, whither theſe methods lead, ſhall we ſtill perſiſt in the ſame road? Are we reſolved on our own Deſtruction, and ſo fond of it, that we will create our ſelves and others perpetual anxieties, perplexity and pain, rather than not effect it? Or does it become thoſe who are in ſo many places taught,

taught, by our Lord Chriſt and his Apoſtles, not to *take care for the morrow, to caſt all our care upon one who* ſurely *careth for us*, to *commit our ſelves to him in ways of well-doing*; does it become, I ſay, ſuch to be ever boding the worſt that can come? You'l ſay perhaps, Yes; our Sins deſerve it. But is not the Reply as obvious as that Anſwer; Why do we not rather reform them, than ſtill fondly pretend we dread their Puniſhment? Nay is not this pretended dread, one of our Sins? If it be only pretended, 'tis Falſeneſs and Hypocriſie: If it be real, it is an injury to our ſelves, in putting our ſelves in a perpetual Little-eaſe; to others privately, in communicating to them the ſame inquietude; to the publick, in ſowing and fomenting Diſcontents. It is beſides a Diſhonour to God, in not truſting him, and quieting our minds by ſuch truſt; and finally, a part of great uncharitableneſs (if no further

re-

reflection) to our Governours and thoſe who have the management of affairs. We are apt ſometimes highly to extol and admire (as our greateſt intereſt here on earth) the *Life of Faith*: What becomes of this Life, while we indulge in our ſelves, and poſſeſs others with ſuch reſtleſs and (it is to be hoped) unreaſonable fears? or can we ſay, we commit our ſouls into the hands of God for their future ſtate, but dare not truſt him, for the preſent with our Bodies, Eſtates and Families? In a word, if we will not abandon this unworthy temper, we muſt be told, we hereby only expreſs the want of the Power of Godlineſs, which moſt certainly would work us to an intire reſignation of our ſelves to his holy Pleaſure, and to a cheerful dependance upon him, as knowing *he governs the World*: He will *be exalted upon the earth*, and bring to paſs his own Counſels both in *purging* and in *preſerving his Church*; nor

nor does he need we ſhould ſtep out of our way to help him.

§ 6. I preſume now the Advice may be taken, which I have formerly and often given ſome people to no purpoſe; let none who pretend to the Power of Godlineſs, *buſie themſelves* and *interpoſe in things that belong not to them*, eſpecially (ſuppoſing them private men) not in modelling, agitating, much leſs controlling and counterworking the *affairs* and concerns of *State*. Our Province is *Godlineſs*: What has that to do with *State-politicks*? The Scripture often reproves *Buſie-bodies*, and by warning us that we take heed we ſuffer not as *Buſie-bodies*, ſuggeſts to us that it is neither eaſie for us to avoid ſuffering (in one kind or other) if we will be ſuch; nor creditable to ſuffer as ſuch, 1 *Pet.* iv. 15. There is nothing has more expoſed ſome people, nor perhaps more hindred the Reformation they deſired, than their inor-

ordinate

ordinate meddling in publick Affairs and intruding into, or carrying on ſecret political deſigns. And we know it is the ordinary Character of one reputed the great Founder of a certain Sect (I will neither name Sect nor Perſon) that he was a ΠΟΛΥΠΡΑΓΜΩΝ, a man which would concern himſelf in more Counſels than he was welcome to. A ſtrange thing it is, that after ſo many paſſionate Admonitions given them to the contrary, nay after ſo many Reproaches and Defeats which ſome men have ſeen fall upon themſelves and Followers, they will not be wiſer and quieter. How juſtly might the Apoſtles have been ſtiled *thoſe who turned the world upſide down* (Act. xvii. 6.) had they acted at the rate that our Goſpellers have now long accuſtomed themſelves to? But we cannot obſerve in thoſe certain and antient Saints, the leaſt tendency to tampering or drawing the People into Cabals

Cabals and Mutinies, though they endured a thouſand times more for Religion than any amongſt us. Both they and our Lord Jeſus ſuffered the Governments of the world to keep their old Model, and run in their former channel, were obedient to every *Ordinance of Man*, or *humane Polity* they were caſt under, and preſcribed the ſame, contenting themſelves, and (both by Example and Doctrine) teaching us to content our ſelves, under Authority, to *lead quiet and peaceable Lives in all Godlineſs and Honeſty*. We find then no *Admonitions* to Senates or High Courts of Parliament written; no *Remonſtrances*, no *holy Common-wealths*: It was not then eſteemed a part of Chriſtian Zeal, to be undermining and lifting men out of their Rights, dictating Conditions of Subjection, aiming at the miſplacing Miniſters of State, nominating new ones, and in a word, practiſing as

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if we had more Wit and Right to govern, than thoſe whom God in his Providence has ſet over us. I hope all men of any ſerioufneſs in Religion will learn at length to lay aſide this meddling Humour; and that not only in the State, but even in other mens private concerns, where they are no wiſe invited or called thereto (for there is a more private ſort of Pragmaticalneſs alſo) that they will *ſtudy to do their own buſineſs*, not taking upon them to be Directors, Tranſactors or Menagers, where nothing but their own buſie Humour gives them any inducement or incouragement.

§ 7. Let us on all ſides *forbear and avoid*, as far as is poſſible, whatever we know is *apt to offend* or provoke one another: As far as is poſſible, I ſay; and by poſſible I mean as far as we can and may: For *Id tantum poſſumus quod jure poſſumus*: Our Power ought not to

extend beyond our Right. Strange and unreaſonable are the Practices, which ſome mens Bigotry, or Irregularity of Zeal puts them upon: What is the meaning of certain peoples crying out of our Liturgy (ſo thoroughly in this behalf reformed) under the Terms of the *Engliſh Maſs-book*, Popery new dreſt, and the like? And then, how comes that very Doctrine, in one mans Mouth or Book, to be *Pelagianiſm*, *Socinianiſm*, *Arminianiſm*, Advance towards *Popery*, *&c.* wch in anothers is Orthodox, Sound and Godly? Nay, why is it only an expreſſion of Zeal in one, and ſtudy of Innovation in the other? Again, on the ſide of thoſe who are zealous (and that juſtly) for the Liturgy; What is the meaning of filling the Peoples Common-Prayer Books with *Pictures*? our Church Books have none. How came theſe into the hands of Proteſtants at their Devotions? How unſeaſonable in this

this juncture? Our Bibles laid aſide: both they and Preaching exclaim'd againſt by ſome. Sundry more ſuch practices as theſe, amongſt ſerious people on both hands, might be named which only breed ill Bloud, create Jealouſies of one another, inhance our Feuds and Animoſities, which God knows we have no need of. This kind of Zeal, is no effect, but an enemy, of the *Power of Godlineſs*. Let, in the name of God, our Zeal confine it ſelf to its proper Objects, things neceſſary, *Faith*, *Holineſs* and *Peace*: And while, on one hand, we plead for *Purity*, let us not forfeit *Sobriety*: while on the other, for *Conformity* to our Church-Laws, let us not prove *Nonconformiſts* our ſelves, by *going beyond* them.

§ 8. Let us give off that uncharitable *wicked humour*, of *placing Godlineſs in Opiniaſtry*, or being rigid in ſome Controverſial points. How many are there who will by

no means allow him capable of the Power of Godlineſs, who is not a ſtrict *Calviniſt*; either ſupralapſarian, as perhaps the Maſter, or ſublapſarian, as his more wary Followers? With theſe men *Calviniſm* is the *Standard of Piety*, nay of *Chriſtianity*. Yet are they again paid off in their coin by *Adverſaries*, who ſhall tell the world, no Calviniſt can be better than an Hypocrite or Athieſt. Theſe extremities are very ill, and *Charity is a more excellent way*. I confeſs, in dubious queſtions methinks that part ought to be choſen which moſt effectually preſſes Holineſs: By their Fruits, that is the tendencies of the Doctrines, ſhall ye know them, *viz.* the Teachers, whether they teach true or falſe. Yet, to ſome men, that may ſeem to preſs on and further Holy life, which in other mens thoughts deſtroys it. In the mean time we ought to remember, it is not bad and *illogical arguing*, but bad

bad and *immoral living*, which is incompatible with the *Power of Godlineſs.*

§ 9. Laſtly therefore, I will conclude this Advice with an humble but moſt earneſt Requeſt to all Chriſtian people, That they will *maintain a large and true catholick Spirit*, not confining Sanctity and Salvation to their own party, but *loving and praying* for all, who any where give evidence of the Fear of God, and walk according to the Goſpell, being ready for *Union and Accomodation* upon whatſoever lawful terms they may. Mutual ſtrangeneſs, averſneſs and antipathies to one another can never flow from, nor be reconciled with the Power of Godlineſs. Whether I ſhall be heard herein, I know not; or if expoſed as I have been, and eſteemed weak, as I am, I care not: But ſure I am, *Peace and Holineſs* are ſuch Twins, which weep and ſmile, flouriſh and languiſh together: nor can ſelf-

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will'd and turbulent Spirits ever vouch themſelves to be of God.

I have thus noted the chief Faults which occur to me in thoſe who pretend on any hand to the *Power of Godlineſs*: Namely, *overlooking* in themſelves *ſpiritual evils*; *Oſtentation* or making a more ſpecious Profeſſion of Religion than is conſiſtent with modeſt Sincerity; *Indiſcretion, or heedleſneſs in our Converſation*, I mean, a not imploying our utmoſt care and prudence that our Behaviour be for the Honour of the Goſpel; *Querelouſneſs* or crying out upon the Times, or Government; *unreaſonable Fears*, and Surmiſes; a *buſie pragmatical Humour* both in publick affairs, and the private concerns of other men; *Bigottry*, or irregular Zeal for a Party; *placing Sanctity* in a *ſcheme* of perplex'd and perplexing *Opinions*; and finally *Schiſmatical Uncharitableneſs*. More *Evils* poſſibly I might have taxed, and more Advices given

given to men of this *Character*, but they occur not. Good men, I hope, will add hereto; *Bernardus non videt omnia*; God amend all theſe in any.

FINIS.

[illegible] all of my Children [illegible]
Richard Dawson was borne ye 14th of
July 1687 about 12 a Clocke in the
night in ardmagh
Anne Dawson was borne ye second day
of February 1688 about Eight a Clocke
in the morning in ardmagh
John Dawson was borne ye 15 of nov
november 1691 about seven a Clocke
in ye morning in clounish Castle
Walter Dawson was borne ye 10
of January 1693 about nine
a Clocke in the morning in
Cormeen
Elizabeth Dawson was borne ye
28 of november 1695 betwen seven
and Eight a Clocke in ye morning
Kilcrow
Richard Dawson was borne ye 15
of aprill 1697 about 12 a Clocke
in the morneing in Kilcrow
Mary Dawson was borne
The 12th of october ~~also~~ betwoen
5 and six a Clocke in the afterno
in Kilcrow anno Domi 169[illegible]

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